



Did you know that athletes in training need an extra hour of sleep?

According to the National Sleep Foundation, most people need about seven to nine hours of sleep a night. If you're an athlete in training, that may not be enough.

Just as athletes need more calories than most people when they're in training, they need more sleep, too. **All the stress and practices require more time to recover.**

Sleep is Important:

- Not getting enough sleep doesn't only make you tired the next day, it has a big impact on what's happening inside your body.
- Sleep is the time when your body repairs itself, if we don't get enough sleep, we don't perform well.

So what does sleep deprivation do to your game?

- **Decreased energy.** Sleep deprivation reduces your body's ability to store glycogen - energy that you need during endurance events.
- **Worse decision making and reflexes.** Studies have shown that athletes who don't get enough sleep are worse at making split-second decisions and less accurate.
- **Hormone changes.** Not getting enough sleep can increase levels of **cortisol**, a stress hormone that can slow down healing, increase the risk of injuries, and worsen memory. It also lowers levels of growth hormone that helps repair the body.

Sleep Tips for Athletes

- **Get on a regular schedule.** Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- **Avoid sleep medication.** Over-the-counter sleep aids are likely to disturb the quality of your sleep and your performance the next day. Rely on natural relaxation techniques before bed, such as deep breathing.
- **Reduce caffeine.** Cut back on caffeine and alcohol 2-3 days before a competition. You may want to **avoid caffeine** all together, including energy drinks, as that could disrupt your sleep. Caffeine is also a dehydrator, another reason to avoid!

Sleep should be a priority. Getting enough sleep doesn't only help with athletic performance. It can do so much more – increasing your resistance to colds, reducing pain, improving your memory, and helping you lose weight.

No wonder drug has more benefits than an extra hour of sleep.