

How much sleep do we really need to work productively?

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Every one of us, on average, **will be sleeping 24 years in our lifetime**. That's a pretty long time if you ask me and makes it even more important to know exactly how the phenomenon of sleep impacts us.

And still, there are so many unanswered questions evolving around sleep and how much we need of it. In fact, Most of what we know about sleep we've learned in the past 25 years.

Eliminating the 8 hours per night sleep myth

“We’ve all been told you ought to sleep 8 hr., but there was never any evidence.”

Says one of the most acclaimed researchers about sleep Daniel Kripke in an interview. In his most recent study Kripke found that **“people who sleep between 6.5 hr. and 7.5 hr. a night, live the longest, are happier and most productive”**.

Of course, the general idea about the “one-fits all sleeping amount” is particularly odd, as Jim Horne, one of Europe’s most acclaimed sleep experts mentions in his book: “It’s like saying everybody should have size eight shoes, or be five foot eight inches.”

The trap of too little sleep: What happens to our brains if we don’t have enough sleep?

Whether we are sleep deprived or not, we lose focus at times. And that is precisely where the sleep deprived person lands in a trap. Once we start to lose focus and have received the right amount of sleep, our brain can compensate for that and increase attention. If we are sleep deprived, our brain can’t refocus.

“The main finding is that the brain of the sleep-deprived individual is working normally sometimes, but intermittently suffers from something akin to power failure,”

Quick fact: Women need more sleep than men

“The average is 20 minutes more, but some women may need slightly more or less than this.”

Why? This is because women’s brains are wired differently from men’s and are more complex, so their sleep need will be slightly greater, says Horne in his book.

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