Sleep - The Impact on Our Health

The biggest health issue facing American today is stress. The impact of stress on our bodies results in insomnia and sleep loss - which can wreak havoc in our lives. Stress is also the most common reason stated when people are asked why they started yoga - in an effort to bring balance back to their lives.

“It's ok - missing a little sleep isn’t going to kill me.” This is where we’re wrong. The impact of sleep loss on our bodies is reflected in numerous areas - on both our effectiveness on a daily basis as well as the long term effects on our health and overall quality of life.

The Dallas Yoga Center hosts international teacher and author Gary Kraftsow on October 16-18, 2015 for a workshop about Yoga Therapy for Insomnia and Sleeplessness. Gary Kraftsow is a pioneer in the transmission of yoga for health, healing, and personal transformation and founder of the American Viniyoga Institute.

In this weekend workshop Gary shares tools for managing insomnia—including asana, breathing techniques, relaxation, mental practices, and education. The sessions will be lecture and practice both. No prior yoga experience required.

‘While the brain sleeps, it clears out harmful toxins, a process that may reduce the risk of Alzheimer’s, researchers say.

*During sleep, the flow of cerebrospinal fluid in the brain increases dramatically, washing away harmful waste proteins that build up between brain cells during waking hours...”*

"It’s like a dishwasher,” says Dr. Maiken Nedergaard, a professor of neurosurgery at the University of Rochester and an author of the study in Science.

The results appear to offer the best explanation yet of why animals and people need sleep. If this proves to be true in humans as well, it could help explain a mysterious association between sleep disorders and brain diseases, including Alzheimer’s.

The report also offers a tantalizing hint of a new approach to Alzheimer’s prevention, Bateman says. "It does raise the possibility that one might be able to actually control sleep in a way to improve the clearance of beta amyloid and help prevent amyloidosis that we think can lead to Alzheimer’s disease."


‘When we lose sleep, it seems we lose our ability to think on our feet — to take in new information and adjust our behavior, according to a study published in the June issue of the journal Sleep.

Researchers at Washington State University figured this out by rounding up 26 volunteers. Half went without any sleep for two days, while the other half slept normal hours. Over the course of a week, the scientists tested everyone’s ability to complete decision-making tests.

In one test, the volunteers had to click a button when they saw certain numbers and hold back when they saw others. Then the rule was switched.

The well-rested group did better on this task in general. But when the rule was reversed, none of the sleep-deprived volunteers were able to get the right answer — even after 40 tries.

"It wasn’t just that sleep-deprived people were slower to recover,” says Paul Whitney, a psychologist at the university who led the study. "Their ability to take in new information and adjust was completely devastated."

NPR Article - Short on Sleep? You could be a disaster waiting to happen - May 12, 2015 by Maanvi Singh [http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/05/12/406137352/short-on-sleep-you-could-be-a-disaster-waiting-to-happen](http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/05/12/406137352/short-on-sleep-you-could-be-a-disaster-waiting-to-happen)
According to the National Institute of Health:  

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK19961/

“Sleep loss and sleep disorders are among the most common yet frequently overlooked and readily treatable health problems. It is estimated that 50 to 70 million Americans chronically suffer from a disorder of sleep and wakefulness, hindering daily functioning and adversely affecting health and longevity.”

“The cumulative effects of sleep loss and sleep disorders have been associated with a wide range of deleterious health consequences including an increased risk of hypertension, diabetes, obesity, depression, heart attack, and stroke.”

“Aside from these, insufficient sleep is also responsible for motor vehicle and machinery-related crashes, causing substantial injury and disability each year.”

“Getting sufficient sleep is not a luxury—it is a necessity—and should be thought of as a “vital sign” of good health.”

As stated by the Center for Disease Control:  

http://www.cdc.gov/sleep/index.html

The Benefits of Yoga via Yoga Alliance:  

https://www.yogaalliance.org/LearnAboutYoga/AboutYoga/Benefitsofyoga

Stress relief: The practice of yoga is well-demonstrated to reduce the physical effects of stress on the body. The body responds to stress through a fight-or-flight response, which is a combination of the sympathetic nervous system and hormonal pathways activating, releasing cortisol – the stress hormone – from the adrenal glands. Cortisol is often used to measure the stress response. Yoga practice has been demonstrated to reduce the levels of cortisol. Most yoga classes end with savasana, a relaxation pose, which further reduces the experience of stress.

Pain relief: Yoga can ease pain. Studies have shown that practicing yoga asanas (postures), meditation or a combination of the two, reduced pain for people with conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, autoimmune diseases and hypertension as well as arthritis, back and neck pain and other chronic conditions.

Better breathing: Yoga includes breathing practices known as pranayama, which can be effective for reducing our stress response, improving lung function and encouraging relaxation. Many pranayamas emphasize slowing down and deepening the breath, which activates the body's parasympathetic system, or relaxation response. By changing our pattern of breathing, we can significantly affect our body's experience of and response to stress. This may be one of the most profound lessons we can learn from our yoga practice.

What is your health worth to you? At DYC our goal is to be an urban oasis of peace and calm. Nestled amidst the busy city, DYC provides a place of refuge to renew, relax and reduce stress. Real Yoga * Real Change