

## **Snooze, you don't lose zzzzzzzzzzzzz**

Sleep is one of our bodies strongest allies, it can lift your mood, thinking and memory, lower stress and build your immune system. That is quite a lot of benefit considering you don't have to do anything except lay your head on a pillow.

### **How do you know if you are getting enough ZZZZZZ?**

Researchers have said adults should be getting 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. While teenagers need more, around 8 to 10 hours per night. If you are having trouble sleeping this can affect multiple elements of your life.

### **How Sleep and Mental Health are Linked**

Lack of sleep amps up stress reactions. When we are tired, we are going to get stressed much more easily. Everything from an unexpected phone call, a last minute meeting, to a minor disaster, has the possibility of overwhelming us during the day. This is much more likely to trigger stress responses in our bodies.

### **No phones before bed**

Many of us will relax on our phone before we head off to snoozeville, but it has been proven that this negatively impacts the quality of our sleep. The advice is to swap your phone for a good old fashioned book or listen to a relaxing podcast or partake in meditation.

### **Sleep is your Superpower**

In the deep dive into the importance of slumber, research has shown employees who implement healthy sleep boundaries, such as not looking at their work phones out of hours or replying to email at 3am are generally happier and more productive in their roles. There are many wonderful things you gain when you get enough sleep. For example, sleep improves your learning ability. Without the right amount of sleep your brain cannot hit the "save button". In addition, we now know you need to prepare your brain in advance of learning to gain the most benefit, and this comes in the form of healthy sleep. Without sleep the memory functions of the brain become bogged down and you can't absorb new memories. Gone are the days of pulling an all-nighter.... If you want to remember what you have studied.

### **Prioritise your sleep as you would your work responsibilities**

The Hippocampus which sits on the left side and right side of your brain can be seen as the informational inbox of your brain. It basically is good at receiving new memories or learning and holds onto them. Sleep generates good learning and a healthy Hippocampus.

### **How can employers help employees with their sleep?**

Allowing your employees to spend their holiday, breaks, sabbaticals wholeheartedly, rather than instilling an expectation that emails will be replied to will make a huge difference in their sleep quality and overall mental health.

## Teach the importance of sleep

You as the employer can promote healthy sleeping habits in the workplace through messaging – employees do not have to be “On” all the time. Encourage employees to take time off.

We know sleep is important, if you need help implementing Wellbeing processes and procedures, IHR Solutions is here to help.

## About the Author

### LAURA FINDLAY

Laura is a HR professional with 18 years’ experience with Financial Services, the majority of which has been within insurance.

In her role with UKGI Group, Laura works with Katherine Watkins, Head of HR Consultancy and provides objective support to firms on employment law and HR issues. She uses her interpersonal skills and knowledge to work with firms to help them develop strong and resilient HR strategies and establish healthy organisational cultures.

Laura is an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). She holds a Diploma Professional Development Scheme.

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