

Dead Bone Tired and Don't Even Know It! - By Joel Metelits, MD

Insomnia, which is defined as having sleeping difficulties, is often not recognized by a broader range of the population. The reason is that the focus is all too often on *falling* asleep, which ignores the function of sleep: the recharging or the refueling from the day's wear and tear. A surprising fact is that falling asleep consistently within five minutes is not a reflection of good sleep. On the contrary...it is actually a reflection of being overly tired.

The reasons for becoming overly tired can include a) a lack of enough sleep (at least 7-7.5 hours), b) poor sleep quality, or c) both. Falling asleep within 5 to 15 minutes is considered normal. If you fall asleep in less than five minutes, but after a few hours you are easily awakened (wake up to subtle sounds such as someone tiptoeing into the bedroom or a car driving past the house, or if you are aware of turning over during the night) your sleep is superficial and lacks the good quality needed to feel refreshed.

Throughout my years of practice, I continue to hear these rationalizations for why my patients easily wake up from sleep:

- *I get up because I have to urinate* (true unless if just a little "tinkle")
- *I wake up to let the dog(s) out*
- *I have kids and keep an ear open to be available* (true if you still have young children)
- *I trained myself to get up before the alarm goes off*
- *Everyone in my family sleeps this way- it's normal for me*

- *I am not a nap person, so even when I am tired I just fight on*
- *Sleeping longer is just a waste of time*
- *I never needed much sleep*

Without experiencing good sleep, how can you value it? You may not be able to envision what waking up rested is like or what good sleep means! Tired people are often unaware of how tired they are, since they develop tools to counter their tiredness. These tools often include:

- Drinking caffeine
- Staying busy. As soon as tired people have nothing to do, they often crash and dose off easily.
- Multitasking. Since one task is not enough stimulation to keep them awake, they do multiple things at once.
- Repetitive behaviors. This can include smoking, eating sunflower seeds, knitting, etc.
- Eating carbohydrates. Tired people do not reach for a celery sticks, they need sugar.
- Regular fairly aggressive exercising, especially after work

So if you or a loved one falls asleep consistently in less than five minutes, sleeps superficially after their first one to two hours of sleep, and "lives tired," please speak with your provider to start the process of figuring out why. For optimal energy and health you need to have a fully charged battery obtained only by achieving adequate quality sleep.

Free Hearing Screenings

Thunderbird Internal Medicine is offering a free hearing screening **Saturday, January 22nd** at 5620 W.

Thunderbird Road #C-1 from 9:30 a.m. – noon. A presentation on "Understanding & Treating Hearing Loss and Tinnitus" starts at 10:30 a.m. There is no cost for the event, but registration is required. Please RSVP to (602) 938-6960 or cube1@thunderbirdim.com



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