



## *Maintaining a healthy circadian rhythm*

Circadian rhythms are the daily cycles of body functions that are the foundation of good health. These body clocks in your lungs, heart, kidney and brain are central to a properly functioning immune system. A synchronized circadian rhythm ensures that your body processes proceed as planned so if it needs to, your immune system can fight and defeat a virus.

All you need to maintain a robust circadian rhythm is develop a daily routine and stick to it.

Circadian rhythms in your body are synchronized by when you eat. Eat at regular times every day, within an 8- to-12-hour window. Studies show that nearly 50% of adults are likely to eat over a 15-hour window or longer. Such large eating windows disrupt the body's circadian rhythm and weaken your liver, muscle, heart, kidney, lungs and intestines, making it harder to fight an infection.

Maintain a consistent sleep schedule. If you're working from home, this may be an opportunity to use that time you're not commuting to work on actually getting eight hours of sleep a night. Studies have shown that chronically sleep-deprived people have weaker immune systems, making it easier for infections and viruses to gain entry to the body.

Finally, being outdoors in daylight for at least 30 minutes each day is a great way to synchronize your brain clock with the outside world. It also reduces depression and anxiety and increases alertness. Also, just 30 minutes of UV light, in sunlight, on clothing may kill bacteria and viruses that may be on the exterior of our clothes.

So, for a healthy brain and body, be consistent. Remember sleep, eat, light, exercise and manage stress. Here's an ideal routine:

1) Spend eight hours in bed each night to allow at least seven hours of sleep so your brain can rest, detoxify and rejuvenate.

2) Eat within an 8- to 10-hour window of time each day, so the time from when you first eat or drink to your last is 10 hours. (Make sure that the last calories are consumed two to three hours before bedtime.) This time-restricted eating may also help shed some extra weight and manage blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol.



3) Spend at least 30 minutes outdoors during daylight hours to reduce depression, increase alertness and improve your mood.

4) Manage stress by spending quality time with the people you live with and get in touch with your faraway family and friends over video chat. Keep your mind busy with positive thoughts, read some books you wanted to read for a long time, make new music playlists, play some board games or do puzzles. Avoid too

much TV and depressing news.

5) Get some exercise. Try to get in some steps. Walk around the neighborhood. Take an online Pilates, Yoga or exercise class at home. Try to do your intense exercise in the afternoon which can give you the most benefit of exercise.

