

SLEEP LIKE A CHAMP


 Zzz

Sleep is one of the most powerful performance-enhancers around. Athletes who get consistent, quality shut-eye reap many benefits:

- Optimal recovery
- Higher immunity
- Stable mood
- Enhanced protein synthesis
- Heightened mental focus
- Optimal reaction time
- Weight management
- Hormonal regulation
- More predictable appetite
- Lower overall stress markers
- Reduced body inflammation



GETTING ENOUGH Z'S?

Research suggests sleep needs are greatest during adolescence. Most young athletes should be getting a minimum of 9 hours of sleep per night; more during heavy training periods.

U.S. SPEEDSKATING PRO TIP:

A hot shower before bed is effective at increasing sleep quality. We use this strategy to improve sleep quality on the road, when our athletes are adjusting to new time zones.

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SLEEP SUCCESS

- Have the same bedtime and wake time daily. This includes weekends, holidays and periods of travel.
- Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual. Reading, listening to soft music, prayer or taking a bath are all great options.
- Exercise daily or find other stress-relief such as yoga, hiking, gardening, or playing with a pet.
- Set up the perfect “cave.” Block out light with heavy curtains or an eye shade. A fan, white noise machine or earplugs will help drown out noise. Keep your room cool, between 60 to 67 degrees.
- If you can’t fall asleep, go to another room with dim lighting and do something relaxing (reading or a simple puzzle) until you feel drowsy.
- In the hour before bedtime, avoid stimulating activities and stay away from screens. Avoid caffeine in the later part of the day.
- Refrain from eating heavy, high-fat or spicy foods too close to bedtime.
- Limit napping time to 10 to 25 minutes during the day and not too close to bedtime.

NAPPING KNOW-HOW

Do your best to meet your body's sleep needs every night. Sometimes napping is necessary, especially during times of heavy training, high stress or illness. Short, targeted napping can improve mental clarity and recovery. Stick to these guidelines:

1

Set an alarm and limit naptime to 10 to 25 minutes. Have a plan to get up right away so you're not tempted to snooze longer.

3

During periods of illness and injury, you may need to take longer naps to heal your body.

2

Time your nap around 8 hours after your morning wake time if possible. This helps your body stay on its natural sleep/wake rhythm.

4

If you find the need to nap every day, consider adjusting your sleep environment as outlined previously.



MOON MILK

Ever heard of having a glass of warm milk to help you fall asleep? Well, science supports this practice and it is an easy addition to a nighttime routine. Plain, warm milk will do the trick or you can add some flavors to change it up.



- Cinnamon
- Honey
- Chamomile
- Turmeric
- Tart cherry juice



DID YOU KNOW...?

Protein synthesis is maximized when we sleep. Overnight, your body is busy repairing tissues that have been taxed during the day. A high-protein bedtime snack could speed recovery, which is critical to reaching athletic potential. Consider having a cup of yogurt or a whey protein smoothie before bed to help boost recovery from demanding training.

“ Sleep plays a key role in our athletes' health and well-being, and is an integral part of their recovery routines. The better our athletes sleep, the better they perform. **”**

—Shane Domer

US Speedskating, High Performance Director



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