



Driftless Holistic Wellness

*“Let food be thy
medicine and
medicine be thy
food”*

-Hippocrates

Welcome to Driftless Holistic Wellness! Here we focus on finding root causes for our symptoms and nourishing our bodies into more optimal health. This month we focus on the important impact of good quality sleep on our bodies, and ways to help improve the quality and duration of our night's sleep.

Healing Power of Sleep

On average, humans will spend one third of their lives sleeping. We've been told time and time again how important it is to get our 7-9 hours of sleep every night, but what exactly is it about sleep that is so important? What happens when we sleep?



Driftless Holistic
Wellness is now sharing
office space on
Wednesdays with
O'Brien Physical
Therapy!

For in-person Nutrition
Response testing, ionic
detox foot baths, [Bemer](#)
[therapy](#) sessions, or
picking up supplements,
you can visit
3208 State Road
La Crosse, WI

-by appointment only -

Sleep is like eating, as it is a life-sustaining, and crucial activity for us as humans. The exact purposes of sleep are not fully understood, but accepted and logical theories are as follows:

- *Restoration*- rebuild and rejuvenate tissues. Sleep is when protein synthesis occurs, where we grow muscle and repair tissues (a very crucial aspect of body building), rid the body of toxins (adenosine builds up in our brains daily, making us feel sleepy, and is eliminated most during sleep), and secrete hormones crucial for growth and development, as well as weight maintenance and hunger control (human growth hormone, leptin, ghrelin).
- *Cognitive and psychological development*- Sleep has a critical role in brain development in infants and children, as well as adults (infants spend 13-14 hr/day sleeping), and allows for short-term memories to become long term memory. Nerve cells communicate and reorganize during sleep. The emotional centers of the brain are at increased activity during sleep, and suffer when sleep deprivation occurs, hampering our emotional balance.
- *Immune function*-Cytokines are produced during sleep, and are key in inflammatory processes and in preventing infections. Also, antibodies and other immune cells are produced in higher amounts while we sleep.



Calming Herbal Tea Recipe

Ingredients:

Use a combination of 1-2 tsp of dried or 1-2 tbsp of freshly picked herbs

Mint
Lemon Balm
Lavender
Catnip/catmint
Stevia leaf
Basil
Chamomile flowers
1 tsp raw honey
Fresh lemon slice

Lightly rub fresh herbs in between your palms or fingers before adding to a mug or tea infuser. Add dry herbs to infuser ball, tea sachet, or simply add to your mug. Pour boiling water over the herbs and let steep for minimum of 3-5 minutes. Strain out the herbs or remove sachet/infuser ball and stir in the honey and squeeze the lemon slice before dropping into the tea. Enjoy warm in the winter or brew double strength and ice for a cool calming drink in the summer.

(feel free to add cinnamon, ginger, or fennel if you have an upset stomach)

Sleep Deprivation

Our bodies suffer severe consequences when deprived of adequate sleep

- Cognitive/Emotional- decreased efficiency, productivity, ability to learn, impaired judgment, coordination, emotional instability/mood disturbances, anxiety, sympathetic nervous system dysfunction
- Cardiovascular- increased blood pressure, insulin resistance, diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease
- Additional effects: decreased immune function, frequent infections, increased risk of injury, and *early mortality*!



Sleep Hygiene

Easy ways to help improve your sleep:



- Get at least 20 minutes of moderate exercise daily *at least 2 hours prior* to your usual bedtime.
- Minimize screen use or blue light exposure *at least 1 hour* before bedtime
- Use a medical grade red light or get outside during twilight (higher level of natural [red-light exposure](#)) to help your body's natural circadian rhythm and melatonin production.
- Only use your bedroom for relaxing activities and avoid things like studying, game playing, or movie watching where you'd normally sleep.
- Practice "earthing" or [grounding](#)- walk barefoot or wear [grounding footwear](#) to connect to the earth's electromagnetic frequency. The suprachiasmatic nucleus (region of the hypothalamus responsible for circadian rhythm) of our brain is sensitive to not only light frequencies but also electromagnetic frequencies. Allowing our bodies to connect with the earth's natural frequency can help regulate our sleep and wake cycles, decrease sympathetic nervous system response, cortisol levels, aid in relaxation, improve immune function, and decrease inflammation.
- Decrease external disruptive manmade frequencies around bedtime by turning off your wifi at night, using an actual alarm clock as opposed to your cellphone, remove your smart watch when sleeping, etc. All of these devices produce low level frequencies that disrupt our normal nervous system functioning and can impair our sleep quality.



Driftless Holistic Wellness

Check out the “[Resources](#)” tab on www.driftlessholisticwellness.net for reputable whole-food supplement brands, greens powders, and snacks, and high quality nutritional products, as well as [Earth Runners grounding sandals](#). Additional stress -reducing and calm-inducing supplementation options are available through my [Fullscript](#) services as well.

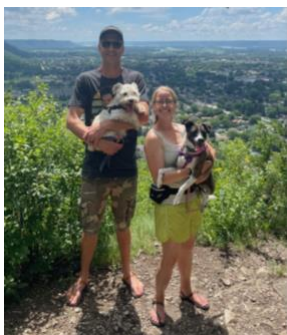


Relaxing Foot Salt Recipe

Ingredients:

2 C Epsom salt/magnesium sulfate
 ½ C bentonite clay powder
 15-20 drops of essential oils (lavender, chamomile, bergamot, clove, mint, ylang ylang,.) diluted in a carrier oil (jojoba, almond, apricot kernel)
 ½ tsp ginger powder

Mix all ingredients together with a plastic spoon and store in a glass or plastic container/jar. Use ½ cup of the mix and add to a foot basin with warm/hot water and relax!



This year, my husband and I bought a pair of [Earth Runners sandals](#), as he had heard about the health benefits of “earthing” and the calming effect this has on your body. We found this company and love the cute minimalist look, and started wearing them as everyday shoes, on hikes, walks, out on the town, you name it! It took a bit to adjust the straps and get used to how they fit, but I honestly found our evening walks to be much more relaxing, and hiking adventures produced a sense of calm energy. We were surprised how comfortable they felt while hiking on uneven surfaces. If our feet felt tired afterwards, we just soaked them in an Epsom salt bath and crawled into bed soon after.

-Kay Wiedenbeck RN, BSN, OCN, NRT

Supplemental Strategies for Sleep Improvement

Focus on stress management and initiating the parasympathetic nervous system

- **Ashwagandha**- This is a root herb commonly used in Ayurveda medicine, and used for a wide variety of reasons, but most commonly as an adaptogen for helping reduce the effects of stress on the body. Safely used in children and adults, this herb helps promote relaxation at night, but also provides a sense of wellbeing and energy during the day. It also helps support the thyroid and adrenal glands, which in turn helps dampen the stress response, and results in lower levels of cortisol. Helpful for those who are stressed, wired, but also very exhausted.
- **Magnesium and other minerals**- When stressed, our bodies become depleted of magnesium and other essential minerals required for all of our metabolic reactions. Replace this with nutrient-dense whole fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds, and supplement with high quality mineral sources for emotional balance and relaxation such as: [Min-Tran](#), [Min-Chex](#), [Magnesium Lactate](#)
- **Passionflower**- a safe and fast acting/[calming herb](#). Helps with quickly getting out of a state of anxiety. It has no side effects or medication interactions and can be used in children and elderly. Can be found in teas and taken as an elixir or supplement in combination with other herbs for sleep or stress relief.
- **Kava**-known as the “[peace elixir](#)” or “root of happiness”- a [root](#) from the pepper family grown in the South Pacific Islands. It can be used for general anxiety, for stress induced insomnia, smooth and skeletal muscle relaxation, and pain relief. It can be used acutely for 6-8 weeks consistently, or over longer periods on an as-needed basis.
- **Chamomile**- “[a mother’s hug](#)”- relaxing and calming, gentle, traditional American herbal [supplement](#) used most commonly in teas, applied as an essential oil, or taken as an elixir. Can be steeped for 20 minutes to become a medicinal as opposed to simply a tea. Helpful for unwinding a stressed nervous system.
- **Lemon Balm**- promotes a sense of calm quickly and gently without any sedative effect. A traditional western medicinal herb. Can be used as a tea, or in supplement form as a tablet or liquid extract. Safe to be used in newborns up to those of advanced age.
- **Tuna Omega 3 oil (or fish oil)**- initiates the parasympathetic (rest and digest) nervous system. Also provides anti-inflammatory essential fatty acids that help nourish the brain and promote emotional wellbeing (DHA essential fatty acid). If you’re already on a fish oil supplement, try taking it before bed at night and see how well you sleep!

In general, by eating fresh whole foods and using food-based nutritional supplements, we can increase our mineral and nutrient intake, and help mitigate the over-active sympathetic stress response. It’s also helpful to take the time to turn off blue light devices and harmful electromagnetic frequencies (wifi), and practice winding down before bed (try a foot bath or whole-body bath or some tea!), relaxing, reading, mentally reviewing the day, and finding some positives to focus on before you sleep.