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Do You Realise How Much Sleep Affects Your Weight Loss Efforts?

It's time to bash the sleep drum again. It's been a little while since I tried to highlight the importance of good quality sleep. And it is important, much more than we realise. Sleep is something we cut short too easily - we need to help a friend, finish something we've been working on, watch the last episode of something on tv. Honestly though, I think we need to give our sleep as much attention as the food we eat.

If you're not getting enough sleep, you know about it - you're tired, irritable, and you feel like you need an early night.



But the knock on effect of this on your health is something we don't really notice, I'll keep the focus of this piece only to weight loss, although poor sleep does affect every aspect of our health. The most consequential effect of a lack of sleep to our weight loss quest is the raised blood sugar levels the next day. From a weight loss perspective, the main effect of these higher blood sugar levels are increased hunger and cravings.

Are you more hungry than you used to be, or than you ought to be? Look at your sleep quality. If you're hungry fairly soon after eating, and you 'shouldn't' be (i.e. You haven't done loads of activity to burn through your last meal), take a look at whether it might be tiredness. Take a nap, or if you can't, see if a cup of coffee (no later than about 2-3pm though!) helps - use this for information. If the energy boost from a coffee gets rid of your hunger, try to have some more sleep the next few nights and see if you can find a pattern.

Perhaps you don't feel refreshed when you wake up. If you're getting enough time

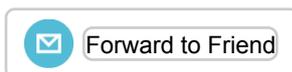
asleep (i.e. you used to feel good on the same amount of sleep) then you might want to have a go with a sleep tracker to see whether you're getting a decent amount of deep sleep. I can help you with this if you ask.

I didn't really realise until recently the full extent of how much my own sleep quality affected my food intake. I'd always known that people who haven't been sleeping well can eat around 40% more calories than those who do sleep well, but the real meaning of this hadn't clicked for me. I'd often find myself inhaling the contents of the fridge around 9pm, and didn't realise until someone pointed it out to me that perhaps my body was trying to find a way to keep going through tiredness. Upon inspection, I saw a pattern of a couple of days of hard workouts, a couple of nights of disturbed sleep and generally being busy always preceded my fridge-inhaling moments. Since, I've been following my own advice to make an effort to go to bed earlier and to wind down better in order to get to sleep more easily. The effect has literally been amazing. My hunger has seriously plummeted, so I can go way way longer between meals, I get very few cravings and by being (very!) firm with myself about not having anything other than caffeine free tea after dinner, it feeds the cycle - I get better quality sleep because my body isn't busy digesting food I'd eaten too close to bed time.

So there you have it. Sleep is a crucial part of your weight loss journey and could well be the missing piece for you. I can help you improve your sleep quality, if you're struggling, please ask me to help.

Until next time, enjoy staying healthy!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Heather". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a red flourish that extends to the left and then curves back towards the right.

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