

Early to bed



Early to Bed April 17th 2013 Section 1 It's not unusual you can hear the floorboards creak, the toilet flush, and the sound of the first one shoe drop to the floor from your neighbor at 1 a. m. in your apartment, and you may be one of them. Nowadays many people stay up late, especially for those people who have variable sleep schedules, such as university students. University students usually change their sleep schedules due to studying, working for a living, or working for social networking (e. g. alcohol and caffeine consumption). Staying up late usually leads to insufficient sleep, and this situation is prevalent among university students. According to a survey done by Leon C. Lack Ph. D. in the journal "Delayed Sleep and Sleep Loss in University Students", "A sample of 211 university first-year psychology students... accounted for about 50% of the total enrollment in the course... about 50% of the sample complained of insufficient sleep and estimated needing about half an hour more sleep on the average to feel rested. (Lack, 2010) Moreover, the author also realized the linkage between staying up late and the insufficient sleep, "Delayed sleep pattern presumably arises from a delay in their endogenous biological rhythms that creates difficulty in falling asleep early enough to get sufficient sleep before necessary weekday morning awakening." (Lack, 2010) Both delayed sleep and insufficient sleep can cause serious health issues, and also affect one's working productivity. Based on the Journal named "Pathways to adolescent health sleep regulation and behavior" by Ronald E Dahl, M. D. "There is mounting evidence that sleep deprivation has its greatest negative effects on the control of behavior, emotion, and attention... the most obvious direct health consequences of insufficient sleep are high-risk behaviors associated with substance abuse and automobile accidents." (Dahl, 2002)

Delayed sleep may harass one's circadian rhythm, and further lead to delayed sleep phase disorder. Insufficient sleep may cause emotional fluctuation, which further affect your social networking relationships since being tired usually means being grumpy. Students usually think that they are more productive at night, however the truth is opposite. Humans aren't used to staying up late, in the optimal situation, based on an article from CNN Health, " we rise in the morning and after about 16 hours of wakefulness we are sleepy and we go to bed and sleep for eight hours" (Shives, 2010) Staying up simply means we use our brains so intensively even when our brains are ready for a rest. During the weekdays, delayed sleep and insufficient sleep make us feel tired in the daytime, and it is difficult for students to be concentrated in classes, then further affect students' academic performances.

The benefits of sleeping early are obvious. Going to bed early helps us maintain the order of circadian rhythm and ensures the quality of sleep at night. Based on Dahl's journal, " Sleep appears to be particularly important during periods of brain maturation. " (Dahl, 2002) Sleeping is the process of restoring our brain, we would be more productive, concentrated, and confident in our work during daytime. Sleeping early means we can have more time in the morning. Changing and maintain sleep schedule is a continuous process. It is impossible to accomplish all the changes overnight.

In order to successfully switch sleep schedule to optimal situation, we should be aware the healthy issues derived from delayed sleep, identify a target behavior with a personal research, set achievable and incremental goals as time goes by, and finally reward your success. Section 2 As a junior-year

university student at business school, both my academic and personal life have been busy, being productive is one of the major factors that let me survive. I often stayed up late to get work done since I thought sacrificing sleep created more time for work, and then I could keep abreast of my schedule.

However, things just went contrary to my wishes. First of all, staying up shorted my sleep time, which led to insufficient sleep time. Then I had to use coffee to fight for fatigue and tiredness, but my productivity still kept low during classes. In order to catch up what I left during the classes, I had to spend more time to study outside. After I finished all my homework, it was usually around 1 a. m. , but the drag effect of caffeine kept me waking up at that time. My daily life was a vicious spiral and I found my body reactions slowed down physically and mentally, my motion was under the weather and even affected the relationship with my girlfriend. Therefore, the main reason I've chosen to sleep early is increasing my productivity and getting rid of fatigue and tiredness without caffeine. In order to optimize my sleep schedule, I organized a three-stage target schedule: The first stage (3/30 to 4/15), I went to bed at 12: 00 a. m. and woke up as usual; the second stage (4/15 to 4/30), I went to bed at 12: 00 a. m. and woke up half an hour early as usual; the third stage (After 4/30), I went to bed at 11: 00 p. m. and woke up one hour early.

Half a month has passed, even though I am in the second stage, but I do have some progresses that benefit for my daily life. Setting a fixed time to go to bed forces me to manage my time more effectively. Most importantly, sleeping early gives me more energy in daytime, and now I can keep my

brain working without caffeine even I wake up half an hour early than before. My productivity is improving, and the biggest change is I can keep myself on the same page with professor in lectures simply because I have enough energy to think more and interact mentally.

Nevertheless, things won't change overnight, and I do encounter some difficulties during my behavior changing. So far, the biggest challenge has been my habit of staying up in my sub-consciousness. During weekdays, as long as my schedule gets crowded, I will have the intent to delay sleep time out of habit even those tasks are not urgent; in weekends, parties are attractive for me and most of them last until late night. Be honest, I did not meet my short-term goal three times so far. Reaching my ultimate goal is not easy, and I am implementing some strategies hopefully to keep myself on the right track.

First of all, I believe separating my plan into three short-term stages makes my plan as a continuous improvement that is easier to accomplish and encourages me to proceed; second, finding a change agent is important. My girlfriend is my change agent, and she has helped me to act with the criteria I set closely. One advantage of choosing my girlfriend as the agent is I have to listen to her order because I do not want to piss her off. Even though I've not reached my ultimate goal yet, some potential long-term benefits can be observed.

First and foremost, I will be more productive in my academic performance. Sleeping early provides my body an optimal circadian rhythm which gives me a high quality and sufficient sleep at night. Consequently, I will have abundant of energy to handle my busy university life. Moreover, sufficient

energy will enable me to balance my academic life and personal life more reasonably, and then I will have a great passion to maintain my private relationship with my girlfriend and my social networking.

Last but not least, sufficient sleep will give me a healthy life that will be the utmost foundation for my body health in my future life. Section 3 By reviewing my journal entries for the past half a month, in sum, I did follow my stage short-term target in weekdays. Meeting the short-term target in each stage is easier in weekdays because my class schedule is relatively fixed. Nevertheless, meeting the target in weekends has been the difficult part. As I mentioned in the last section, attending parties held in weekends last late made me out of my planned track.

Moreover, since I was used to stay up late for a long time, sometimes I still consider staying up is a way to relax myself. As for the change of emotional process, at the very beginning, I even felt anxious when I went to bed without completing my tasks as usual, and this emotion hindered me to fall asleep. Fortunately, as I reorganized my tasks priority corresponding to my early to bed plan, and that anxious emotion has no longer been a problem. Below is a snapshot of my tracking chart.

Cells with yellow filling indicate weekend days, and times in red font indicate failing fulfillments. Works Cited Lakc, L. C. (2010). Delayed Sleep and Sleep Loss in University Students. *Journal of American College Health* , 105. Dahl, R. E. (2002). Pathways to adolescent health sleep regulation and behavior. *Journal of Adolescent Hleath* , 10-11. Shives, L. (2010, 11 30). Get Some Sleep: Are you a night owl? Here's why. Retrieved 4 17, 2013, from CNN

Health: <http://thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2010/11/30/get-some-sleep-night-owl-its-a-real-condition/>