

# Rest & Recovery

Sleep has been described as the cheapest, most effective recovery tool available; while many athletes spend a significant amount of money on supplements, recovery practices (massage, nutritionist & physiotherapist consultations) and medicine, sleep is ingrained into our behavior from birth.

Chronic sleep deprivation impacts swimmers' academic performance and general health. A study conducted in Australia from 2008-2012 revealed the following:

1. "Athletes self-reported poorer mood, and higher exertion ... effects on perceived mood and exertion could impair an athlete's motivation, and thus their ability to train effectively;
2. "... impaired immune function ... places [athletes] at greater risk of developing upper respiratory tract infections and other health problems.
3. "... impaired cognitive capacity, glucose metabolism and appetite regulation ... could impair the training performance of elite athletes."

Our first few months of Coaches' Corner have been about simple ways to improve your swimmers' health and performance (in the pool, in the classroom and in the home). Make hydration, nutrition and sleep a priority.

Proper sleep for Athletes:

## WHY GET MORE SLEEP

Studies show a direct link to young athletes' reaction time, accuracy and endurance to getting proper amounts of good quality sleep.

- one study showed swimmers with 17% faster reaction time off blocks with better sleep
- Decreased sleep left athletes feeling exhausted faster during practice/workouts
- 9-10 hours of continuous sleep helped with muscle memory

Sleep deprivation shows poor athletic performance, higher levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, and lower growth hormones which are present during tissue repair (crucial for muscle rebuild).

## THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SLEEP:

"To promote optimal health, the American Academy of Pediatrics Childhood Sleep Guidelines recommend children ages of 6-12 should get 9-12 hours of sleep and teenagers 13-18 should sleep 8-10 hours every night."

## GOOD SLEEP HABITS

- going to sleep and waking around the same time every day –Create a sleep routine
- Caffeine can stay in your system for up to 12 hours, so avoid it after 2 p.m.

- Sleep in a cool, dark, quiet environment. Avoid phones, movies, video games and television an hour before bed
  - blue light from your phone mimics daylight which activates your brain- delaying REM sleep and disrupting proper sleep cycles
  - Blue light is also linked to lower melatonin, the hormone responsible for your sleep-wake time

For further reading: <https://swimswam.com/swimmers-and-sleep/>

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/physical-activity/athletic-performance-and-sleep>

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/sleep-and-athletic-performance>