



WHY IS SLEEP IMPORTANT FOR RECOVERY?

Quality sleep is essential for muscle repair, immune function, and overall recovery—especially after orthopedic injuries or surgery. Poor sleep can increase inflammation, slow healing, and impact hormone regulation, making it harder to recover efficiently. Proper nutrition plays a critical role in supporting sleep quality and optimizing recovery.

KEY NUTRIENTS FOR BETTER SLEEP & HEALING

1. Protein & Amino Acids

Protein supports muscle and bone repair while also aiding in the production of serotonin and melatonin, hormones essential for sleep regulation. Include:

- Lean meats (chicken, turkey, lean beef)
- Fish (salmon, tuna, cod-rich in omega-3s)
- Eggs
- Dairy (Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, milk—contains tryptophan)
- Plant-based proteins (tofu, lentils, chickpeas, quinoa)

2. Healthy Fats

Omega-3 fatty acids reduce inflammation and may improve sleep duration and quality. Choose:

- Fatty fish (salmon, sardines, mackerel)
- Nuts & seeds (walnuts, flaxseeds, chia seeds)
- Avocados
- Olive oil

3. Complex Carbohydrates

Slow-digesting carbs help stabilize blood sugar, prevent nighttime awakenings, and promote relaxation. Opt for:

- Whole grains (oats, brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat bread)
- Starchy vegetables (sweet potatoes, squash, carrots)
- Legumes (lentils, black beans, chickpeas)

4. Magnesium & Calcium

These minerals support muscle relaxation and nerve function, improving sleep quality. Include:

- Leafy greens (spinach, kale, Swiss chard)
- Nuts & seeds (almonds, pumpkin seeds)
- Dairy (milk, yogurt, cheese)
- Beans & lentils

5. Hydration & Herbal Teas

Staying hydrated prevents muscle cramps and restless sleep. Herbal teas like chamomile and valerian root can support relaxation.

THE ROLE OF SATIETY HORMONES IN SLEEP

Leptin & Ghrelin These hormones regulate hunger and satiety. Poor sleep increases ghrelin (hunger hormone) and decreases leptin (satiety hormone), leading to increased cravings for high-calorie foods. Proper nutrition and good sleep help maintain a balance, preventing overeating and supporting recovery.

Cortisol High stress and poor sleep can elevate cortisol levels, leading to increased appetite and inflammation, which can slow healing. A nutrient-dense diet can help regulate cortisol and promote better sleep.

FOODS & HABITS TO AVOID BEFORE BED

Certain foods and behaviors can disrupt sleep:

- Caffeine (coffee, energy drinks, dark chocolate)—Avoid 6 hours before bedtime
- Heavy meals—Avoid eating large portions within 2 hours of sleep
- High-sugar foods—Can cause blood sugar spikes and crashes
- Alcohol—Disrupts sleep cycles and reduces REM sleep

EXAMPLE BALANCED MEAL PLAN FOR BETTER SLEEP & RECOVERY

Breakfast Scrambled eggs with spinach, whole-grain toast, and avocado

Lunch Grilled salmon with quinoa, roasted vegetables, and olive oil

Snack Greek yogurt with walnuts and mixed berries

Dinner Baked turkey with brown rice, sautéed kale, and roasted sweet potatoes

Evening Snack Herbal tea with almonds and a banana

Want Personalized Nutrition Guidance?

Contact our dietitians to schedule a consultation!

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