

SPEAKER, CONSULTANT, COACH, AUTHOR

Michelle Cederberg, CSP

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The Energy to Succeed
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Sleep: The Quest for Rest and Relaxation

By Michelle Cederberg, MKin, BA Psyc, CEP, Co-Active Coach

“Sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together.”

~ Thomas Dekker

When I was personal training full time I was up before dawn most days of the week to meet my clients before they headed to work. Despite my early mornings I would stay up late watching television or hanging out with friends. I survived on 5 or 6 hours and I was tired all the time, only I didn't realize to what extent.

My body was so used to running on empty that I thought this was normal. My days began at 5:30 am and often stretched into the dinner hour. Before long my coping skills began to decline and I eventually fell into a state of burnout that had me rethinking my work schedule. I needed to prioritize rest and recovery, pronto!

Zzzzzzz's PLEASE!

It's surprising to me how frequently I hear people oppose the idea that sleep is necessary. I've listened to dozens of full-grown, seemingly intelligent adults tell me they can get by on much less sleep than the average person, or that they have *way* too much to do to warrant getting to bed at a decent hour. Sure they're tired they tell me in one breathe, but they don't have a choice I hear in the next. *Is there a place around here I can grab a coffee?* And by the way, I often wonder...why would you just want to get by? Perhaps you gave up the idea of restorative, health-giving zzz's when false energy became abundantly available in the form of pills, elixirs and energy beverages? After-all, caffeine is not illegal, and *man* those energy drinks can pack a punch!

Maybe you really want to sleep better and longer but you're trapped in the daily grind of too much to do and not enough time to do it? I've had entire audiences tell me that if they were given extra time in the day to do whatever they pleased, they'd choose sleep.

It could be that you need ideas and tactics to prepare for sleep and stage your bedroom for optimal sleep. Or perhaps you've been wandering around in a sleep-deprived state for so long now that you've

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forgotten what it feels like to wake up without your alarm clock feeling refreshed, alert and keen to get on with the day? If you identify with any of these scenarios then read on my groggy friend.

The Quest for Rest

I'm not certain when sleep became a luxury, but it seems to be something that many of us top up once the weekend arrives; or on the next vacation. I'm here to tell you that's not how it works. Rest and recovery is not something that can be gained through infrequent overdoses. It's a daily requirement alongside energy-producing exercise and healthy eating. Why fight it?

It reminds me of my nieces and nephews when they were young. They would regularly fight with their parents around bed-time insisting through droopy eye-lids and stifled yawns that they weren't tired yet. Fatigue had made them irrational and at 4 and 5 years of age caffeine and energy drinks were out of the question so they would lose the battle and be carted off to bed. But not you.

You'll fight it until the last possible moment, fitting in more housework, another load of laundry, endless emails and internet surfing or mindless television until you drift into a listless sleep on the sofa. You call that restoration?

How Much is Enough?

I wish this was an easy question to answer. Most experts agree that when it comes to quantifying ideal amounts of sleep there is no magic number. Sleep needs will vary by age, and are as individual as a finger print.

While a very small percentage of the population will be able to function on less sleep, most adults will function best with somewhere between 7 to 9 hours per night. But it's not that simple.

National Sleep Foundation research suggests that quality sleep is a function of two factors; your basal sleep needs, which is the amount of sleep your body requires to function optimally, and your sleep debt or the amount of sleep you lose to poor sleep, illness or other factors. Put simply, the quantity and quality of your sleep.

It's not enough to log a consistent 7 hours per night if your sleep quality is poor or if your body actually needs more. To ensure optimal zzz's for outstanding energy do some sleep research of your own to determine your specific needs.

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Sleep 101

The first step in your sleep evaluation is to pay attention to how you feel as you wake up and go through your day. If you've had enough sleep you should feel energetic and awake the entire work day, and still have energy to spare for family and after work activities. That would be nice wouldn't it? However, if you're like most busy people you probably wake up lacking energy or you feel drained before the day is out. To truly feel your best you need to get more rest.

Begin by scheduling an extra half hour or more of sleep each night. Keep a sleep diary and record your bed time, total hours you sleep and how you feel upon waking. Before long you'll begin to see a pattern and be able to hone in on your magic number. Once you have that number then make it your goal to schedule that amount of sleep every night.

I know it's not always that simple. Many people allow enough time for sleep but then find themselves tossing and turning through the night. Maybe you can't fall asleep, or you fall asleep easily but have trouble staying asleep? I don't know if there is anything more frustrating.

Regardless of your circumstances I'm hoping by now you understand the importance of sleep for restoration, every-day energy and long-term health and are willing to explore your sleep options. Let's look at two aspects of healthy sleep; the routine or rituals that will help you sleep better, and your sleep environment.

Sleep routine

How can you expect to fall into blissful sleep if you race through a hectic day and then over-stimulate your mind with high intensity television, blast your brain cells with internet information overload or keep working right up until lights out?

And your body won't wind down well if you feed it unhealthy snacks or too much food or alcohol right before bed.

If you want to ensure restorative sleep the first step revolves around your sleep routine. Your goal is to create an environment in the hours before bedtime that will allow your mind and body to ease into a sleep receptive state.

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Unwind early

If you know you need to get to bed by 10 pm it won't do your sleep efforts any good to be moving at high speed until 9:55. Shut down the television, computer, video games or other high stimulus activities at least 30 and ideally 60 minutes before sleep. Allow your mind to shift gears from work mode to sleep mode.

Eat, drink...and be healthy

Your body is a great big machine that stays fired up as long as you give it food and drink to metabolize. Avoid big meals at night. Eat dinner earlier and avoid heavy, fatty foods or any food you know could bother you later.

To get a good night's sleep limit your alcohol intake. It may help you fall asleep faster but it reduces the quality of your sleep and you'll likely wake up at 2:30am with a dry mouth and headache. Cut down on caffeine. I can't have caffeine any time after 2pm if I hope to sleep well at night. Some people can have sleep problems from caffeine they drank 10 hours ago! Why not switch to water or herbal tea after lunch?

Hydrate, but not too late. If you drink lots of tea, juice or water into the evening there's a good chance you'll be up in the middle of the night for a bathroom break.

There are hundreds of reasons to quit smoking, and sleep trouble is one of them. That nasty nicotine is a stimulant that will keep you awake longer and since you may experience nicotine withdrawal through the night it will affect your sleep. Besides, smoking is no way to start your day.

Relax with a ritual

If you find it difficult to shut off the stress of the day try slowing down with a bed time routine that promotes relaxation. Take a hot bath or sip on a warm cup of camomile tea. Do some slow stretches or deep breathing. Listen to some calming music or meditate. Make simple plans for the next day. Read or do a favourite hobby. Lower the lights to induce production of melatonin, the hormone that helps you fall, and stay asleep. Every small effort you make in the direction of calm will add quality to your sleepy time.

Set a sleep schedule

Yes, I know you're an adult and should be allowed to stay up as long as you like, but unless you are free to sleep in endlessly that behaviour will catch up with your energy levels if it hasn't already.

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You've got a good idea how many hours of sleep your body really needs to work at its best. Why not see how it actually makes you feel?

Ideally you'll choose the same bed time every night so your body gets into a routine. Get to bed early enough that you consistently get enough rest and before long you'll be waking up refreshed and energized *before* your alarm clock.

To Nap or Not to Nap

Be cautious about napping during the day. It can be a great way to recharge or catch up on sleep but if you nap too late in the day you may have trouble sleeping at night. If a nap is necessary, keep it to less than 30 minutes in the early afternoon.

If your evening television vigil often ends with you snoring on the couch beware! Fight the urge to nod off. If it's near bedtime go to bed. If it's still early get up and do something mildly reviving. Pack your workout gear and make your healthy lunch for tomorrow, call your mom, put away the dishes. That late night nap will cut the edge off your fatigue just enough to leave you staring at the ceiling at bed time.

Clear your head

A quick journaling session at the end of the day is a great way to clear your head of worrying thoughts or lingering to-do's. Before lights out, allow yourself 5 minutes to write down all your stressors; a work problem, a conflict with someone, a financial worry – and maybe even one or two steps you can take toward resolving the stress.

Before you put the journal away write down at least 3 things you are grateful for. Put your stress to rest so you can have rest success.

Use Good Scents

Aromatherapy oils like chamomile, juniper, lavender, marjoram, rose and sandalwood all have a sedative effect when inhaled.

Rub a wee bit on the insides of your wrists or on your temples and breathe in the relaxing fragrance as you drift into dream land.

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Sleep environment

Okay, so you created a routine and have been sticking to it faithfully and still, quality sleep alludes you. The next step then is to optimize your sleep environment.

Get a Good Bed

Did you know that we spend about 1/3 of our lives in bed? If you want those hours to be comfortable and restful it's essential that you invest in a mattress suited to your body and its biomechanical needs. Comfort is key. If you can't seem to find a comfortable position on your bed no matter how tired you are or which way you lie, you probably have the wrong mattress.

When shopping for beds sit and lie down on each one for several minutes at a time. Just don't shop for them when you're tired because every bed is bound to feel good.

Better Bedding

You'll improve your sleep with soft, comfortable bedding that will allow for proper temperature control. Sheets with a higher thread count made from 100% cotton or silk will feel more luxurious than synthetic fabrics like polyester.

Purchase the right pillow for your personal comfort preference and sleep style. Try several out before you buy. It's a worthwhile investment in your alignment and comfort.

Go to the Dark Side

To ensure the best sleep possible make your bedroom a low light zone. Your body won't produce melatonin – the sleep hormone – unless it experiences darkness.

At bed time keep your room dimly lit. Make sure window coverings block out all outside light, especially during the long day-light hours of summer. Use a comfortable eye-mask if necessary. And keep the television out of the bedroom. Not only does your TV emit a lot of melatonin busting light, but it keeps your senses stimulated and less capable of deep restful sleep.

Keep Your Cool

Your body temperature rises as you sleep. If you begin your slumber in a warm room you're likely to overheat and wake yourself up as you kick free of your bedding. Keep your bedroom temperature around 65° F or 18° C and allow for adequate ventilation.

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PJ Preference

Whether you wear a satin negligee or flannel jammies make sure your PJ of preference keeps you warm and comfortable throughout the night. If you wear your birthday suit to bed then ensure that your bedding fulfills that role.

Choose pyjamas that won't bind or wrap around you as you sleep. Cotton may be crisp but silk will keep you cool in summer and warm in winter. The perfect PJs will add quality to your sleep.

Silence Please

You'll have difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep if your sleep environment is plagued by unpredictable noises. Close your bedroom door to block out furnace noises or family members. If your bed mate snores or mumbles in their sleep, or you're can't block out traffic or other outdoor noises, try sleeping with ear plugs.

Ear plugs rated at 33 decibels will block out most distracting noises and you'll still be able to hear the smoke detector if it goes off.

Yes, they may fall out while you sleep but they'll stay in long enough for you to get into deeper sleep that will block out some of the noises around you.

White Noise Works

If the idea of sticking rubber bits in your ears makes shudder try the soothing sound of crickets or ocean waves instead. The noises that keep us awake usually vary in tempo and volume. You can often drown out these noises with the steady rhythm of a white noise machine. The steady hum of a fan will have the same benefit and cool your room at the same time.

Breathe Easy

Even though you're an adult I'm going to say this to you one more time. Clean your room. A bedroom full of dust and musty air is difficult to sleep in.

Change the bed sheets at least once a week. At the same time dust the furniture and sweep the floors – even under the bed; and especially if you have pets. Open the windows to let in fresh air. If there are no windows in your room a plant or two will improve air quality and add to your relaxing sleep environment.

We have an air filter in our room that we turn on during the day to remove dust and dander from the air before bed. A humidifier is also a good idea if your room is dry.

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Sleepless Solutions

If you find yourself unable to fall asleep, or you are staring at the ceiling at 3:00 am unable to fall back to sleep, let go of dread. Follow these tips instead.

Don't think so much about it. In order to regain sleep you need to cue your body for sleep. Take a few deep breaths of air and allow your body to relax into a normal sleep position. Try not to stress about the sleep you're not getting and desperately need. That will only keep you awake. When I have difficulty sleeping I repeat two words in my mind as I breathe in and out. As I breathe in I think *calm* and as I breathe out I think *sleep*. Calm...sleep...calm...sleep...calm...zzzzz.

Focus first on relaxation. Willing yourself back to sleep is akin to using the buzz of the alarm clock as a relaxation tool. It won't work.

Focus first on relaxation and let it lead naturally to sleep. Try visualizing a relaxing environment, focus on slow deep breathing, or meditate with soothing words like the ones I mention above. Relaxation may not be a true replacement for sleep but it will still keep you on the path to rest and recovery.

Get out of bed. If sleep alludes you for a period of time longer than 20 minutes get out of bed and do a quiet activity like reading or knitting. Keep the lights low so you stay in a sleep receptive state. If hunger pangs are part of the problem have a light snack. A few spoonfuls of yogurt or a small piece of cheese can provide satiety without stimulating your system into wakefulness.

Write down your thoughts. If you wake up midway through the night with a great idea that is keeping you awake, write it down so your brain can quit worrying that you'll forget it. Expand on the idea the next day when energy and productivity are higher. If you wake up wracked with worry or anxiety about something, write it down and give yourself permission to deal with it in daylight when coping mechanisms are optimized.

Daytime Restoration Exploration

Rest and relaxation isn't just for bedtime anymore. As you rush busily through your day think of ways that you can slow down and catch a breath. Small breathing breaks through out the day will do wonders to moderate your stress levels and add a little restoration to an otherwise crazy day.

- Take your coffee breaks at work. Take a walk or just sit and breathe.
- Get outside at least once per day. Breathe in the fresh air.

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- Eat your lunch away from your desk. Sit and savor.
- Put on your headphones and listen to soothing music for 5 minutes.
- Explore relaxation techniques that you can do on the go.
- Engage in a 20 second mini-meditation. Close your eyes and breathe to the bottom of your lungs for 5 breaths.
- Practice speaking more slowly. You'll feel yourself slow down with it.
- On your way home from work decompress with music or go get some exercise.

So there you go; dozens of ideas to help you improve the quality of your sleep. The *rest* is up to you. If you're always tired and you know you need more sleep then it's time to make it a priority.

You schedule time for work and other commitments so why wouldn't you schedule in your sleep commitments? From this day on promise yourself that you won't cut back on sleep in the quest to conquer your to-do list. I'm quite certain that if you make sleep a priority the energy you gain will make you more productive during the day anyways. It will all get done. Now, go to bed!

See page 10 for even more tips.

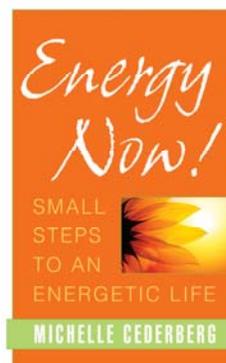
This article is an excerpt from Michelle's upcoming book **Energy Now! Small Steps to an Energetic Life** which will be released by Sentient Publications January 2012. If you're interested in learning more about the book and being alerted of pre-release promotions please visit www.worklifeenergy.com and subscribe to her weekly *Energizing E-spiration*. We'll keep you in the loop!



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Energy NOW!

Sleep Tight

- *PVR your favourite late night show and go to bed an hour earlier tonight.*
- *No more caffeinated beverages after 1pm.*
- *Walk away from TV an hour before bed.*
- *Oh go on, save the laundry for another day. Take that nap. You know you want to.*
- *Meditate for 5 minutes before you hit the sack. Or just breathe deeply and slowly. Same diff.*
- *Exchange massages with your partner. If you're tired it will soothe you into restful sleep.*
- *Sip on camomile tea.*
- *Avoid high protein and fatty snacks within 2 hours of bed-time. They take longer to digest.*
- *Exercise during the day will help you sleep better at night. Walk on!*
- *Turn off the computer and read before bed instead.*
- *A nice warm bath or shower is a great way to relax and unwind before sleepy time.*
- *If you must have a night cap, keep it to just one. Too much alcohol disrupts the sleep cycle.*
- *There are only two activities that should take place in the bedroom. TV isn't one of them.*
- *Clean your room! You'll sleep better if your sheets are clean and your space is dust-free*
- *Quit smoking please. It's the wrong kind of stimulant for the bedroom.*
- *Luxuriate in great pyjamas.*
- *Keep your room cool and dark to promote deep, comfortable sleep.*

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Michelle Cederberg, **CSP** (*Canada's newest Certified Speaking Professional*)
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Michelle Cederberg wants her audiences to have the energy to succeed in business and in life; and with over 20 years experience as a college educator, personal trainer, author, entrepreneur, life coach and Certified Speaking Professional she's developed innovative and practical methods to get them there. With a Masters in Kinesiology, a BA in Psychology, and a specialization in Health and Exercise Psychology, Michelle combines mind, body, and practicality to inspire change!

Speaking with humour and passion Michelle breaks down the mental and physical barriers that rob us of the energy we need and deserve. She inspires busy people to put their own health and well being back on their priority lists with a small steps approach that leaves them believing they can. Her GOT TO IT journal is a ground-breaking idea that supports the process. Her second book ENERGY NOW! is available January 2012 in book stores across North America.

As a professional speaker, she shares her experiences in a humorous and realistic way with delighted audiences across North America. Through her presentations, products and personality she motivates you to take small steps toward big changes, so you can actually find energy, productivity and success - even with a busy schedule!

One-on-one Co-Active Coaching with Michelle

Are you interested in driving your dreams and plans to the next level? Michelle has been training and coaching clients for many years to help them excel in business and in life. She wanted to learn new methods, expand her reach and grow her coaching business so she is currently certifying as a coactive coach through **The Coaches Training Institute**. She is excited to work with you at great pre-certification rates (you'll pay a third of regular rates)

Co-Active Coaching is a style of life-coaching that inspires the individual to harness their full potential and live a more inspired life. Sessions are by phone, 30-45 minutes each, 3 weeks of every month. Michelle guides you through each session by asking powerful questions that will challenge you to reach to new levels in your life and do more of the things you've always dreamed of.

To book Michelle to speak at your organization or to discuss life coaching opportunities please contact her via the information below or fill out a booking request at www.worklifeenergy.com

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