Hi Champions,

In this month's Newsletter we are focusing on Mother Nature’s greatest legal performance enhancer ….. **SLEEP**

Hopefully this Newsletter doesn’t put you to sleep but if it does then in some way I have done a good job.

Many people don’t fully understand the power of effective sleep but the fact that mother nature constructed a period of the day where we shut down and are defenceless to the outside world makes me think it must have some importance…

**Sleep is the foundation of daily physical and mental performance**

It is a daily necessity that many get wrong, if you want to improve your sleep,view it as a sport. It is a process that people take for granted and don’t realise they can get better at. If you try 10% harder to improve your sleep, you will get 5-10 times greater physical and mental performance in return.

**Pre sleep: The evening routine**

To create the best evening routine you need to understand the physical state the body needs to be in to execute sleep effectively. The main focus points are; **Temperature, arousal, setting and mind space**.

1. Is the temperature of your body lowering? Do you feel the room is a cool temperature to help this?
2. Not arousal in the way you may think… Is your body still on high alert ? Is your heart rate and breathing rate above resting?
3. Environment setting.. Is the room dark to promote the production of melatonin, are you in a familiar surrounding?

**\*Sidenote:** Ever wondered why when sleeping in a hotel room or an unfamiliar place you feel like you can never sleep well?

It is because of a survival mechanism that keeps the brain active and in the shallowest of sleep in case we are under threat and need to flee. (If only we had the ability of an owl who can turn a half of its brain off to sleep while the other half stays awake and then switches so both have a period of efficient rest !)

1. Mind space… like the physical responses, is your mind still active thinking about work or worrying about the next day?

If just one of these conditions aren’t great then the whole sleep cycle suffers !

**During sleep: stages of sleep**

During sleep your body goes through stages of sleep that all contribute to a cycle of sleep. The period of each cycle is 90-120 minutes and within each cycle the body goes through so called “waves” or phases that all contribute to restoring the brain and body for the coming day.

**Stage 1- Light sleep:** This is the transition between wakefulness and sleep, it is the body priming itself for sleep.The muscles relax, breathing rate steadies, heart rate decreases and body temperature drops.

**Stage 2- Deep sleep:** This is the stage when your body gets to work to regenerate and repair tissue in the body (for those wanting to be the next Arnold… you need this, it’s better than drinking a protein shake!).

**Stage 3- REM (Rapid eye movement) Sleep:** Like the name suggests this period is when the eyes move rapidly side to side under the eyelid (it looks like something off paranormal activity!). During this stage, your mind is active but your body is temporarily paralysed and results in vivid dreams. This period is important because your mind is filtering what information is important to keep and remember and what information can be put in the “mind bin”.

Dreams are complex but a basic understanding is that your mind is attempting to link pathways of memories, facts etc together during this time. (Typically why you may find yourself riding a flying horse down Queens Drive with Lionel Messi on the back doing keepy ups on your way to fight voldemort. Not a dream I’ve had…).

**Post sleep: The morning routine**

(Not Ashton Hall style)…. If you don’t know who that is, neither do I but damn did he have an intense morning routine !!

Simple rules of thumb to follow:

* **View morning sunlight before you view your phone screen-** This helps to regulate the circadian rhythm and importantly tell your body it is time to start the day.
* **Move your body-** This can be as simple as a 5-10 minute walk, yoga, stretching or gym workout.
* **Set intention for the day-** Whether this be a to do list or how you want to “show up” during the day, it helps with procrastination and wasting time in the day.
* **Hydrate-** Set a bottle of water by your bed, so as soon as you wake up you can get out of the dehydrated sleepy state.
* **Mindfulness-** Give yourself time (3-5 minutes is good) to connect with your breathing, thoughts and surroundings. This will help in times of stress.
* **Consistent wake time-** This helps prime the body for the day, as it is in sync with essential hormone release at the correct times to benefit brain and body function.

The lowest hanging fruit to improve your sleep:

#1 **Sleep Consistency**- Waking up at the same time everyday, going to bed at the same time everyday. This contributes to a high quality circadian rhythm which describes the body's natural clock and regulates the body to secrete essential hormones at the correct times during your day that aid brain and body function.

#2 **Avoid Caffeine 8-10 hours before sleep-** Caffeine has a “half life” of 3-6 hours meaning if you ingest 300mg of caffeine, 150mg can still be in your system 3-6 hours later. The consumption of caffeine also disrupts the release of essential hormones that are released in aid of effective sleep.

#3 **Adopt an evening routine**- The state you need to be in to sleep is quite specific, the same way you warm up before exercise to maximise your workout. Think about your evening routine as the “warm up” to maximise sleep.

#4 **The 3:2:1 Rule**- 3 hours before bedtime stop eating, 2 hours before bedtime stop drinking large amounts of liquid, 1 hour before bedtime stop screen time.

#5 **Sleep Hygiene**- Ensure your room is dark and cool while you sleep. An increase in body temperature is a reason people wake up in the middle of the night.

Recommended Book for this Topic: **Why We Sleep by Matthew Walker**

This book delves deep into the mechanisms of sleep, the importance of sleep, how sleep influences health and performance and ways to improve sleep.Everything I discuss in this Newsletter in greater detail.

**Interesting Facts of the month: Sleep Records**

On Theme:The longest ever recorded sleep is 8 days.

The longest time recorded without sleep is 11 days. (I don’t recommend)

**Life Hack of the Month: How does free dessert at every restaurant sound?**

Simply add to the description that it is someone’s birthday and boomm … Free dessert (all you have to do really is keep your surprised face when the singing starts). Enjoy :)

**I hope this Newsletter wakes up your mind to the importance of sleep. Here’s to many nights of restorative sleep!!**

**Big thanks for reading,**

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