

7 Ways Sleep Can Help You Lose Weight

Adapted from a HealthLine.com article by Caroline Pullen (<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/sleep-and-weight-loss>)



If you're trying to lose weight, the amount of sleep you get may be just as important as your diet and exercise.

Interestingly, mounting evidence shows that sleep may be the missing factor for many people who are struggling to lose weight. Here are seven reasons why getting enough sleep may help you lose weight.

1. Poor Sleep Is a Major Risk Factor for Weight Gain and Obesity

- Poor sleep has repeatedly been linked to a higher body mass index (BMI) and weight gain.
- A major review found that short sleep duration increased the likelihood of obesity by 89% in children and 55% in adults.

2. Poor Sleep Can Increase Your Appetite

- Many studies have found that people who are sleep-deprived report having an increased appetite.
- When you do not get adequate sleep, the body makes more ghrelin [which signals hunger] and less leptin [which signals fullness], leaving you hungry and increasing your appetite.
- In addition, the hormone cortisol is higher when you do not get adequate sleep. Cortisol is a stress hormone that may also increase appetite.

3. Sleep Helps You Fight Cravings and Make Healthy Choices

- Lack of sleep actually alters the way your brain works. This may make it harder to make healthy choices and resist tempting foods.
- Sleep deprivation will actually dull activity in the frontal lobe of the brain, which is in charge of decision-making and self-control.
- In addition, it appears that the reward centers of the brain are more stimulated by food when you are sleep deprived.
- Therefore, after a night of poor sleep, not only is that bowl of ice cream more rewarding, but you'll likely have a harder time practicing self-control.
- A study of 12 men showed that when participants were only allowed four hours of sleep, their calorie intake increased by 22%, and

their fat intake almost doubled, compared to when they were allowed eight hours of sleep.

4. Poor Sleep Can Increase Your Calorie Intake

- Poor sleep can increase your calorie intake by increasing late-night snacking, portion sizes and the time available to eat.
- A study of 12 men found that when participants were allowed only four hours of sleep, they ate an average of 559 more calories the following day, compared to when they were allowed eight hours.

5. Poor Sleep May Decrease Your Resting Metabolism

- Your resting metabolic rate (RMR) is the number of calories your body burns when you're completely at rest. It's affected by age, weight, height, sex and muscle mass.
- Research indicates that sleep deprivation may lower your RMR.
- One study put 10 overweight adults on a 14-day diet of moderate calorie restriction. Participants were allowed either 8.5 or 5.5 hours to sleep. Both groups lost weight from both fat and muscle, but the ones who were given only 5.5 hours to sleep lost less weight from fat and more from muscle.

6. Sleep Can Enhance Physical Activity

- A lack of sleep can cause daytime fatigue, making you less likely and less motivated to exercise.
- In addition, you're more likely to get tired earlier during physical activity.
- The good news is that getting more sleep may help improve your athletic performance.

7. It Helps Prevent Insulin Resistance

- Just a few days of poor sleep can cause insulin resistance.
- Insulin is a hormone that moves sugar from the bloodstream into your body's cells to be used as energy.
- When cells become insulin resistant, more sugar remains in the bloodstream and the body produces more insulin to compensate.
- The excess insulin makes you hungrier and tells the body to store more calories as fat. Insulin

resistance is a precursor for both type 2 diabetes and weight gain.