



Young Athletes' Secret to Success: Sleep! (Part 2 of 2)

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Getting enough sleep is challenging for the young athlete. Athletes are often over-scheduled with after school activities, heavy workloads of homework and time commitment to training, in addition to their school day. Sports participation often involves participation in travel teams requiring long-distance travel, crossing time zones and staying in unfamiliar settings. Additionally, athletes often experience pre-competition anxiety which interferes with quality sleep. And, sports-related injuries can interfere with sleep. Musculoskeletal injuries can cause pain and discomfort disturbing sleep; while concussions affect sleep quality and rhythms.

What Can You Do in the Office?

Take a sleep history. Common questions to discuss include:

1. Current sleep habits
2. Changes from baseline sleep habits (sleep diary)
3. Prior past medical or family history of sleep disorders (e.g. narcolepsy, insomnia, sleep apnea, etc.), psychiatric conditions (e.g. depression, anxiety, ADHD, etc.) and other relevant health issues
4. Medication use (past and current), both prescription and OTC
5. If using sleep aids, what is used and how often?
6. Caffeine or other stimulant substance intake
7. Recreational drug use history
8. Sleep habits: bedtimes, time of awakening, nap history
9. Subjective assessment of sleep quality: average, better or worse than average, did you feel "rested," presence of fatigue, daytime somnolence, etc.
10. Sports and other extra-curricular activity schedule

Tips for young athletes:

1. Schedule training, competitions, and travel to match the unique circadian rhythms of children vs adolescents:
 - Children: morning
 - Adolescents: afternoon or evening
2. Ensure adequate sleep the night prior to concussion baseline & post-injury neurocognitive testing
3. Advise athletes & parents to maintain consistent bedtime routine both at home and during travel
4. Consider eliminating late-afternoon naps
5. Allow for later morning waking for adolescents
6. Provide a quiet, dark, comfortable sleeping environment
7. Allow for adequate rest between training and competitions
8. Consider use of electronic external memory devices (smartphone, tablet, laptop, etc) to prompt and promote daily functioning.
9. Turn off or remove TVs and electronic media before bedtime
10. Medications are second-line but may be prescribed for sleep impairments if other measures fail; lowest effective doses & short-term use
11. Refer to a sleep specialist if initial interventions fail to improve symptoms
12. Plan travel appropriately to allow for acclimation to time zones and altitude. Allow 1 day in advance at your destination for every time zone traveled.

Please see Part 1 of *Young Athletes' Secret to Success: Sleep!* in our August 2017 newsletter, available on our website. Part 1 contains: Sleep and Injury, Sleep and Performance and Factors that Affect Sleep