

# SLEEP GOALS

## FOR THE NEW YEAR



Most New Year's resolutions focus on losing weight, exercising more, reducing stress levels, and being more productive, however many people may be surprised to learn how closely sleep relates to achieving most of these goals. Getting enough quality sleep is associated with healthier body weight, greater motivation, smarter food choices, better stress management, problem-solving, and attention. Sleep is a habit that deserves just as much attention as other habits, if not more.

- 1. Consistent Sleep Schedule:** Go to bed and wake up around the same time each day, including weekends. Our bodies operate on a natural sleep-wake cycle and to get quality sleep, it is best to go to sleep and wake up around the same times. Also, by winding down 30 minutes to two hours before bed, can trigger a tired feeling.
- 2. Write Down Your Worries:** Before going to bed, write out a to-do list and/or journal. By making a list, you no longer have to worry about remembering to do that important task. Also, by writing out feelings or concerns about a difficult conversation, or a situation you may have experienced that day, may help to better understand yourself and/or others, This also reduces the sources of stress and allows the body and brain to better relax and prepare for sleep.

### **3. Track Your Sleep (self-awareness). Keep a sleep diary and record:**

- Time you wake-up and the time you fall asleep
- How long it takes to fall asleep
- Number of times you wake up during the night
- How much and when you exercised
- Naps (when and length)
- Amount of caffeine you consume (read all labels, including pre/post workout supplements)
- When you eat (meals and snacks)
- Consumption of any sleep aids you may take

Adjusting one or two of these habits can have a huge impact on your sleep

- 4. Sleep Proof the Bedroom:** Light, temperature, noise, and distractions can have a huge impact on sleep. Start the year off right by setting up the bedroom for a good night's rest. This can be achieved by using black-out curtains or an eye mask, ear plugs, turning the thermostat down or turning on a fan, and making sure the bedding is clean and breathable. Exposure to blue-light (screens) can suppress the release of melatonin, the hormone that makes us feel sleepy, so setting a goal to turn off all screens one hour before sleep can go a long way.

- 5. Nap Smarter:** Nap when experiencing a natural dip in alertness (usually around noon), but don't nap too long (less than 30 minutes) or after 3 p.m., as this can interfere with nighttime sleep. When attempting to change one's sleep schedule, its usually best to forgo naps.

Sleep also plays a crucial role in a child's development, health, and mood. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, nearly a quarter of children under the age of five don't get adequate sleep. Inadequate sleep in adolescents can have a long-term effect on academic performance and mental health. Developing – and sticking to – a bedtime routine can benefit kids of all ages and might include things like, turning off screens and games, dressing for bed, reading a book, or doing some other quiet and soothing activity for 20-30 minutes before bedtime.

For more information about sleep, contact the **Semper Fit** team and ask about sleep coaching. Make Sleep Part of Your Fitness Routine!