Improving Your Sleep Environment

Sleep is important to good health and quality of life. The following advice highlights strategies for creating a better sleep environment that will provide you with the best chances for a full and rejuvenating night’s sleep.

Your bedroom should be quiet and relaxing. Unwelcome noise or light, an uncomfortable or worn-out mattress and foundation, or a room that’s too warm or too cool can prevent you from getting the sleep you need. There’s no reason to settle for anything less than the best sleep possible! Is your bedroom conducive to a good night’s sleep? These four factors can make a difference:

**Mattress and Foundation.** Be sure your mattress and foundation meet your needs for both comfort and support. If you sleep with a partner, your mattress should also allow you both enough space to move easily.

**Light.** Light is one of the body’s most powerful time cues. The rising sun can wake up the brain long before the alarm goes off. A dark room is the most conducive for sleep – day or night.

**Noise.** Sudden, loud noises from inside or outside the home can disrupt sleep. Steady, low sounds, such as the whir of a fan or air conditioner, may be soothing because they help block out distracting noises.

**Temperature.** The ideal bedroom temperature is 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit. A room that’s too warm or too cool can disrupt comfortable sleep.

For more information on how to get better sleep, visit The Better Sleep Council website at: www.bettersleep.org

Coral Nafie, About.com

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Kettlebells

Fans of kettlebell exercises say that the loop-handled weights provide an effective core and cardio workout in less than 30 minutes.

If you are pressed for time a kettlebell provides just the workout according to Randy Smith, a banking executive from Atlanta. “I can get an intense workout in as little as 20 minutes.”

Smith and thousands of others who have discovered kettlebells do it though a unique weight training and cardio workout that comes with swinging and lifting a kettlebell, a type of free weight that ranges from 8 pounds to more than 100.

It is different from dumbbells since you work with only one bell at a time. Hoisting the heavy metal bells not only helps strengthen your arms and pecs, but also works your core, heart and lungs. There is an offset of center of gravity, which means your body has to work harder to maintain balance. In so doing, you work many different muscle groups – and get your heart rate up at the same time.

A true kettlebell workout involves a circuit, and, trainers say, exercisers must be trained in how to do the circuit. Otherwise, there could be damage – not only to nearby furniture or mirrors, but to one’s back, shoulders or other body parts.

Consult with your instructor for the weight that you will need. The prices of kettlebells vary by weight and can be found for sale online. To avoid getting your hands roughed up, it is advised to get one with a smooth handle.

Lynne Anderson, WebMD

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Shop the Perimeter of the Food Store

According to “Healthy Eating Begins at the Supermarket,” that’s where all of the fresh foods are. The less you find yourself in the central aisles of the grocery store, the healthier your shopping trip will be. Make it a habit – work the perimeter of the store for the bulk of your groceries, then dip into the aisles for staples that you know you need.

“Healthy Eating Begins at the Supermarket,” Reader's Digest

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Got a Craving? Moderation May Not be the Answer...

In a study, just one taste of a treat triggered more indulgences a mere 25 minutes later. Once people had a taste of an indulgence, such as chocolate, it awakened a need for more goodies. And things snowballed. Here’s how to crush cravings fast:

**Eat an egg breakfast.** A good protein source, eggs may help you pass up junk food later in the day.

**Eat your three squares.** When you skip meals, your taste buds will have a yen for the sweet and salty.

**Grab a bit of whole-wheat bread and olive oil.** The fats in olive oil turn off your hunger.

If you have to indulge, do it early in the day. Our capacity to feel satisfaction from food is stronger in the morning and grows progressively weaker throughout the day.

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Bulletin Board

March is Colorectal Cancer Month.

For information about this disease and how to prevent it go to: www.medicinenet.com/colon_cancer/article.htm

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