



**SLEEP**

**A RUDE AWAKENING**

[www.sleepforhealth.net.au](http://www.sleepforhealth.net.au)

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## **A RUDE AWAKENING**

This week, I attended a lunch time talk given by the fantastic Dr Carmel Harrington, the ultimate sleep expert. Visit her very informative website here: <http://www.sleepforhealth.net.au/>

I have always known that like water and exercise, sleep is incredibly important to our health and well-being. However, I did not realise it was not just important but essential and that sleeping badly has enormous effect on our mental and physical wellbeing.

Dr Harrington shared a huge amount of knowledge about how sleep patterns have changed over the decades, for example, in 1960 people were getting an average of 8 ½ hours kip per night and now we are lucky if we get 7 hours with most people getting a measly 6.3 hours which medically means that we are a nation in sleep deprivation.

With all the knowledge being shared about clean eating, mindfulness and the like, I wanted to share what I learnt in just a matter of minutes about just how badly poor sleep effects everything.

## **Add 5 Things I learnt about sleeping badly:**

1. You are 3 times more likely to experience cognitive degeneration
2. You are 2 times more likely to develop dementia in later life
3. You are 5 times more likely to experience depression
4. There is a 50% increase risk of obesity
5. You are twice as likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke

The above facts are scary in themselves but when you put them into a workplace context, they become even more worrying. Cognitive degeneration fundamentally means poor judgement, bad decision making and not being able to think clearly. Unsurprisingly these consequences are known to create an inefficient and less productive workplace. Additionally, people with poor sleep are 7 times more likely to be involved in a motor-vehicle or occupational accident and increasingly sleep deprivation is being recognised as a major factor in road and workplace accidents.

I was also surprised to learn that we are most alert at 9am and 9pm, with an afternoon slump at 3pm. Therefore, it stands to reason that we should complete our most important/ brain taxing tasks at these times to allow for full cognitive functionality. So, next time you are scheduling an interview or tweaking your CV, bear in mind the timing and what affect that might have on how alert you are and therefore performance.

Learning & understanding the negative effect poor sleep has, has had a profound effect on me and has encouraged me to embrace some of the sleep tips Dr Carmel recommended.

### **My Chosen Top 5:**

1. Cut out Caffeine after 12 noon
2. Adopt a going-to-bed routine: One hour before bed turn off all technology and dim all lighting
3. Do exercise! 20 minutes a day, but not within 3 hours of bedtime
4. Deal with your issues of the day before you begin your going to bed routine
5. Try to eat a wholefood diet with small meals throughout the day. Finish eating 2-3 hours before bedtime