

# Skipped Sleep Hampers Performance

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Men who slept less than five hours a night for just one week were shown to have lower levels of testosterone than when fully rested. In the University of Chicago study of fit 24-year-old males, it was found that sleep deprivation caused a 10-15% drop in testosterone, a hormone essential for building muscle mass and bone density.

Dr Jonathan Leeder, an exercise physiologist at the English Institute of Sport in Manchester, has researched the effects of sleep loss and says both strength and endurance "can take a knock" as a result.

During deeper sleep, human growth hormone (HGH) produced by the pituitary gland is released into the blood. It is HGH that enables essential recovery processes such as repairing muscles and converting fat to fuel.

Consequently, too little sleep means the body produces less HGH and more of the stress hormone cortisol that Leeder says "definitely won't help with muscle recovery and building".

You should set your alarm for the same time each day.

If you do just one thing to aid your sleep, make sure you try to get up at the same time every day, Stanley advises. Hitting the snooze button for a weekend lie-in is not the answer.

Sleep researchers at the University of Arizona showed that a one-hour lie-in at weekends was enough to cause "social jet lag", a phenomenon caused by a discrepancy between your body's internal clock and your sleep schedule, that she linked to mood swings and fatigue.