

# SLEEP AND ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

***If you told an athlete you had a treatment that would reduce the chemicals associated with stress, that would naturally increase Human Growth Hormone, that enhances recovery rates, that improves performance, they would all do it. Sleep does all of those things.***

Most U.S. middle and high school students fail to get the minimum 8.5 hours of sleep their bodies crave. Sleepy students are more likely to be tardy, absent, inattentive in the morning and less able to learn. Teens are biologically built to stay up later and sleep later. **Sleep can affect:**

## **Reaction Times**

Elite athletes can't spare even fractions of a second to react to a play unfolding in front of them. Sleep deprivation is known to reduce reaction times significantly. Studies have shown even a surprisingly low level of fatigue can impair reaction times as much, if not more, than being legally drunk.

## **Reduced Injury Rates, Improved Overall Health**

A University of California study concluded that injury rates in youth athletes increased during games that followed a night of sleep fewer than 6 hours. Another study looking at injury rates in high school athletes found that sleep hours was the strongest predictor of injuries, even more so than the hours of practice.

## **Better Accuracy, Faster Sprint Times**

Sleep is crucial to the body's physiological, biochemical, and cognitive restoration.

## **Fewer Mental Errors**

Sleep loss impairs judgement. Studies have shown motivation, focus, memory, and learning to be impaired by shortened sleep. Past studies have shown that sleep loss impairs the frontal lobe of the brain and has negative effects on decision-making such as sensitivity to risk-taking, moral reasoning and inhibitions.

## **Final Thoughts**

For all of us, sleep is an important component of maintaining optimum health. For athletes, however, sleep becomes a crucial pillar of success. **Reaction times and motor function, motivation, focus, stress regulation, muscle recovery, sprint performance, muscle glycogen, glucose metabolism, memory and learning, injury risk, illness rates, unwanted weight gain.... sleep (or lack thereof) plays a part in all of these things.** And sleep, as more and more athletes are learning, has a **big impact on performance, wins, and losses.**

## **REMEMBER:**

✓ **Muscles Don't Improve During Practice - They Improve AFTER Practice**

✓ **Sleep is the Best Source of Human Growth Hormone - It's Free and Legal**