



e-quilibrium

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Resolving Sleep

Although scientific data about New Year's resolutions are limited, it is estimated that nearly half of Americans make resolutions but less than 10% are successful in attaining these goals. The content of resolutions tends to cluster around health (e.g., being more fit, losing weight, quitting smoking, etc.), use of time (e.g., being more organized, spending more time with family or friends, etc.), and money management (i.e., save more and spend less). At a minimum, resolutions reflect people's aspirations.

One resolution that is rarely made actually affects two of the aforementioned categories, health and time. That resolution would be to get more sleep. Sleep seems to be undervalued with respect to its importance as a health behavior, and perhaps time is the top reason people give for not getting enough sleep. However, a strong argument could be made that if people got more sleep, they would be more likely to have success with other resolutions.

There is extensive research of the ways in which inadequate sleep affects health. Sleep deprivation negatively impacts glucose metabolism, blood pressure, and the functioning of the immune system. Weight management is simply more difficult when one gets insufficient sleep, as sleep deprivation affects the regulation of hunger, appetite, and food intake.

Sleep deprivation impairs cognitive function, so that one is likely to be less efficient and productive. Hence, it takes longer to get things done. Stated in reverse, more sleep can

enhance efficiency and productivity, so that one ostensibly could gain time as a result.

Many resolutions or aspirations require self-control or willpower. Sleep appears to replenish self-control, so that well-rested individuals have more willpower at their disposal. One of the most important expenditures of self-control is to structure one's time to get enough sleep.

Resolutions are largely about making changes for the betterment of one's life, including health. Resolving to get more sleep is an excellent starting point, as being appropriately rested comes with numerous health and functional benefits.

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