

Interruption of the normal sleep-wake cycle may increase serious health consequences.

Evidence is mounting that night-shift work can raise the risk of cardiovascular disease. In a randomized, crossover trial, 30 healthy Austrian physicians submitted to a battery of tests to determine the effects of a prolonged workday on heart rate, blood pressure, cardiac rhythm, and stress hormones. When compared with routine work days, those with prolonged work days experienced significantly higher diastolic blood pressure, more premature ventricular contractions, and higher levels of stress hormones.⁵

PositiveTip: Avoid interrupted sleep-wake cycles as much as possible for good health--and thank your physician for getting up in the middle of the night to care for you when you need it!

Weight loss helps control obstructive sleep apnea symptoms

The diagnosis of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is increasing--maybe due in part to our increasing collective flab. A Finnish study has demonstrated that lifestyle intervention with weight reduction significantly reduces the symptoms of mild OSA and should be tried before other treatments.⁶

PositiveTip: Lifestyle changes accompanied by weight loss improves quality of life in those experiencing mild obstructive sleep apnea.



References

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Tools to Make Your New Years Resolutions Come True

By Fred Hardinge, DrPH, RD

Each of us want to change things about ourselves! Some want to change many things. What tools do we need to use to successfully accomplish these changes? I would like to suggest five that have helped me in my pursuit of change:

1. **Ask God for strength.** It can be a simple as, "Lord help me..." God never removes from us the power to choose. When we humbly yield our will to Him, He "returns" it linked with His power! My will plus His power equals success. He is just waiting for us to ask Him!
2. **Make choices not promises.** Have you ever promised yourself that you will never, ever do something again? When you re-

peated what you were not going to do, you felt like a failure! Next time choose the new behavior, and remember if you fall back to the old pattern, you made a choice. It's a much more positive approach!

3. **Make a strong initial effort.** Changing behaviors is like the sledding hill. The first run down is not much fun, just lots of work. With repetition it gets easier and easier. Starting a new behavior requires a lot of initial effort because you are establishing a new track down the hill of life.

4. **Choose a balanced, wholesome lifestyle.** Things like getting enough sleep, physical activity, a wholesome diet, and positive stress management strengthens our minds, allows us to better concentrate on the task at hand, and makes it easier to choose what is good.

5. **Avoid temptations whenever possible.** Be proactive about where you place yourself relative to temptations. If you have decided to avoid candy, don't put a bowl of your favorite kind on your desk!

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Do You “Hara Hachi Bu”?

In the 1930s, Dr. Clive McCay of Cornell University confirmed that caloric restriction in rodents extends life expectancy by up to 50%—the equivalent of 150 years in humans!¹ This kind of experiment has now been repeated across many species with similar results. Current studies show the same early adaptations in primates on low-calorie diets as other species. Eating less seems to generate fewer free radicals, thus lessening potential damage to cellular machinery like DNA and mitochondria.

Are there human examples of this phenomenon? Finding long-lived populations has been hampered by the lack of reliable age verification data which tends toward age exaggeration and false conclusions. However, Okinawans have what reliably appears to be the largest concentration of centenarians, about 35/100,000 compared to 7/100,000 in the US. This group seems to be remarkably healthy, and differs markedly from Okinawan emigrants in Brazil and the US who have high coronary heart disease and cancer rates.

After 25 years of studying Okinawan centenarians, some clues are surfacing about their dietary habits: a low-calorie, low-fat, plant-based, diet is the key to maximizing life expectancy and minimizing risk of debilitating diseases of aging.²

One of the most frequent New Years resolutions people make is to lose weight. This is often very appropriate after the indulgences of the holiday season! Too often we equate celebration with foods that are high in calories and eat large servings, too!

Perhaps we need to follow the example of Okinawans who practice “*hara hachi bu*”. This traditional Okinawan habit is to stop eating when 80% full! The stomach stretch receptors take about 20 minutes to tell us we are full after a meal. So, if we stop at 80% we will likely be satisfied 20 minutes later. Okinawans eat 10-40% fewer calories than Americans. Serving sizes are about one half of those in the US, too!

Most of us would be better off if we consistently practiced “*hara hachi bu*”.

Eat
till you're **80%**
full



Hot Science Snippets

Big Bellies Linked to Heart Disease in Younger Persons

A ten-year study of more than 20,000 Dutch men and women has shown larger waist sizes and higher body mass index (BMI) were strongly associated with 3-4 times the cardiovascular deaths and almost twice the rate of cardiovascular disease (CVD) than normal weight controls. The average age was 43 years—an age group not usually very concerned with heart health. Those with a larger waist circumference (men > 40.1in. vs. < 37in.; women with > 34.5in. vs. < 31.5in.) had significantly greater incidence of fatal and non-fatal CVD. Persons with a BMI greater than 25 accounted for 54% of fatal CVD.³

PositiveTip: Once again we are reminded that being overweight sig-



ificantly increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and death—even among those in their 40s.

Exercise Keeps Cells Younger

Ever wanted to run from old age? New research in both mice and men demonstrates that literally running regularly helps prevent cells from getting older! German investigators found that regular physical activity helps maintain longer telomeres—DNA sequences at the end of chromosomes that typically get shorter with age. These longer telomeres prolong the life of cells in blood vessel walls and white blood cells that circulate in the blood. Both middle-age runners and younger track-and-field athletes had longer telomeres than older sedentary controls.⁴

PositiveTip: Regular physical activity has exciting anti-aging potential. Let's get out and walk more in 2010!

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I remember talking to a lady who said it was really “hard” losing weight with God’s help! When asked to explain, she said, “As long as I ask God when I first wake up, before I eat breakfast, when I am tempted to snack, and before I eat lunch... I just have to ask Him *all* the time! When I do that He helps me accomplish my goal!”

“Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, ... be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” I Corinthians 15:57-58.