

# 3 Bad Sleep Habits You Need to Break

Posted by Jane Porter | February 13, 2013

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As an entrepreneur focused on how to [grow your business](#), taking the time to develop a sleep routine is probably the last thing on your mind. But some sleep advice simply can't be ignored without paying the price in [productivity](#). Deprive yourself of quality sleep long enough and you'll wind up chipping away at your business and health.

Here are three bad habits you'll need to break, if you want to improve the quality of your sleep:

## **Bad Habit #1: You pull all-nighters then oversleep on weekends.**

You've likely heard you should go to bed and get up at the same time every day to help optimize your sleep. It is advice entrepreneurs often ignore because they're busy burning the midnight oil and think they can compensate later. Think again. Experts say it's critical to keep a target sleep time in mind -- even if it's midnight -- then meet it consistently.

Why is this so important? Our bodies are extra sensitive to conditioning, says Daniel Taylor, associate professor of Psychology at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. When you go to bed and wake up at drastically different hours, you disturb your circadian rhythm—the 24-hour cycle linked to brain activity, hormone production and cell regeneration.

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"It's like living on the east coast for the week, flying to the west coast for the weekend and then turning back around and flying back to the east coast on Sunday night," says Taylor. "If you do that every weekend, you're going to have problems."

## **Bad Habit #2: You check email in bed.**

Your bed should be used for sleep and sex -- that's it, says William Kohler, medical director of the Florida Sleep Institute in Spring Hill, Fla. "The brain likes routine," he says. "When the eye sees the bed, it should be associated with sleep, not activity."

If you can't get to sleep for more than 15 or 20 minutes, Kohler suggests you get out of bed. Lying around obsessing about ideas for your business is not going to help you fall asleep. In fact, you're conditioning your brain to be awake in bed. Instead, get up and write those thoughts down on paper or maybe read a book, but don't lie down again until you're good and ready to sleep.

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## **Bad Habit #3: You never unwind before bed.**

You can't expect to fall asleep quickly when you try to go straight from work-mode to bed. Taking at least an hour each night to unplug from your day can help you sleep more soundly, says Taylor. You could use that time to take a hot shower or bath.

In fact, slightly increasing your body temperature within an hour of bed can help you get a better night of sleep, says Michael Perlis, associate professor of psychology and director of the Behavioral Sleep Medicine Program at the University of Pennsylvania. A 2008 study by researchers out of the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience found that a slight increase in skin temperature before bed helps people shift into deeper stages of sleep. Of course, you should also follow the standard advice of keeping your room cool too, since the body's temperature decreases when you're snoozing.

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