

## Not a Creature Was Stirring...

By Kim Dannies

Do you have a new Sleep Number Bed on your holiday wish list? If not, maybe you should consider it. It's December, the marathon month of deadlines, office parties, shopping, and a universe of social obligations that tend to rob us of our rest time. According to Dr. James B. Maas, a sleep expert from Cornell University, the root of all evil is sleep deprivation. We get too little sleep, compounded by a poor quality of sleep that is fractured by the stresses of market downturns, excessive spending, eating and drinking too much, and family reunions. I saw Dr. Maas speak recently on the topic of sleep and peak performance. He maintains that 70 million Americans are chronically sleep deprived and make crucial business and personal decisions in an impaired state on a daily basis.

According to Dr. Maas, the author of *Power Sleep*, the single most proactive change we can make to improve overall health is go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day, racking up a minimum of 8 hours. Between the 6th and 8th hour in the sleep cycle is when all the magic of brain recuperation occurs. So, if you are trying to get by on less sleep, you are depriving your brain and body of the most restorative segment of the cycle and growing duller and dumber by the day. Why not ask Santa for a copy of Dr. Maas's book and treat yourself to a 2008 filled with peak performances?

Here are some ideas for recalibrating your sleep routines:

### **Sleep Busters:**

Falling into the sack wiped out

Watching TV in bed, especially programming such as *Kill Bill* or Fox News

Eating a quart of Chunk Monkey

Drinking Nogasakis while watching 'The Office' (or imbibing any alcoholic beverage 2 hours before sleep)

Caffeine intake and Dehydration

Working or socializing right up to the moment of sleep

Talking on the phone or using your Crackberry

Reading material that is disturbing or too inspirational (or anything by Ann Coulter)

Arguing or discussing trigger topics

Self-criticism (just do it: book that pedicure!)

Reviewing 'to do' lists in your head

Setting an invasive alarm clock to blow you awake in the morning

*continued...*

## **Channeling the Sandman:**

Enjoy quiet activities like light reading or listening to soft music

Have a warm bath or hot tub

Drink a glass of water at room temperature

Do a little light stretching or easy yoga positions

Journal about your day or plans for tomorrow- a brain dump to clear the mind

Reflect on the positive aspects of the day, loved ones

Meditation: focus on the breath for 10 minutes in sleep position

Visualize best outcomes for the day ahead

Prayer or bio-feedback techniques

## **It's a Brand New Day:**

Condition and trust your bio-clock to wake up naturally without a jarring alarm clock

Wake up gradually with slow gentle movements and calm deep breaths

Extend a warm physical and emotional greeting to your partner (or dog)

Make affirmations of gratitude for your life and intentions

Review compassionate self-discipline goals for your lifestyle choices

Write Morning Pages- journal for 10 minutes to clear and order the mind

Drink a glass of water

Rise only when fully awake

Stretch gently

Eat a light, healthy breakfast

Give yourself the gift of sleep—

Wishing you all a Restful Holiday Season!

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