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### **Vitamin B-12 Deficiency Can Interrupt Sleep**

My father, the pharmacist, always insisted that we kids take our daily B-12 vitamin daily. When I would ask why, my mom would say that it was good for our brains.

It's well-known that vitamin B-12 helps with the production of red blood cells and helps regulate the immune system. As we age, our bodies lose the ability to absorb B-12. As we live, we may not be getting enough of it from our daily meals.

It's a constant maintenance issue-producing enough vitamin B-12 to stay healthy. Not only that, according to [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#), founder of the Natural Health Center in Illinois, B-12 can help you sleep.

"[B-12](#) plays a vital role in melatonin production," he says. "Melatonin has been called 'the sleep hormone' because it is responsible for letting you get a good night's sleep."

Just another reason why I tend to take my father's advice.

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### **Honor the Healing Power of Sleep**

My book club recently read, "[My Stroke of Insight](#)," by [Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, Ph.D.](#).

Dr. Taylor likes to say she lost her "left mind" during a massive stroke that immobilized the left hemisphere of her brain. She was 37 years old when this happened; during her recovery she slept and slept some more. In fact, "honor the healing power of sleep" is number 10 on Dr. Taylor's list of "Forty Things I Needed the Most" in recovery.

A neuroanatomist, Dr. Taylor's discoveries about the brain led her to be invited to speak at the famed [TED Conference](#) last year. As a scientist, she was able to study her own brain functions-motion, speech, feelings-through the stroke itself and then recovery.

Seven years later, her brain continued to need 11 hours of sleep, then stabilized at nine and a half, although Dr. Taylor considers herself a "happy napper."

You don't need to go through a stroke to honor the healing power of sleep, though. Just ask anyone who doesn't.

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Photo credit: [Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor](#)

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### **Staying Flexible Beats Nighttime Stiffness**

How many times do you get up and stretch each day? How about just moving around?

I bet you'd be surprised, especially if you work in an office, at a computer, or telephone. Or you watch morning television, the soaps, or more.

I sometimes set my computer clock to alert me every hour that I need a break. Or schedule it in to my calendar. Because I find I could stay in the same position for hours and not even realize it.

Try standing up after that.

[Flexibility](#) is a vital part of physical fitness. It works together with muscle strength and endurance, the work of the heart, and body composition. Healthy levels of flexibility increase circulation, not to mention relieves stress.

And all of this can keep you relaxed and ready for a good night's sleep.

Be sure to check out my blog at [www.mindbodyfocused.com](http://www.mindbodyfocused.com).

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## **Blackout Curtains**

If you're a light sensitive sleeper, one of our readers suggests this no-drug "assistant" for restful sleep: Blackout curtains.

This solution is great for those who live in areas of the world where the spring and summer days are long, like in the northwestern part of the United States. Not to mention [photographers](#).

For instance, my husband keeps a very early work schedule, rising at 4:00 A.M. He needs to get to bed about 8:00 P.M. and the spring and summer sun is still shining then in Idaho (he's a photographer, too).

For those who travel check out [portable blackout curtains](#).

Not only can blackout curtains help with sleep schedules, they have that [environmentally-friendly cache](#) many consumers are looking for these days. They can help you save on your heating and cooling bills.

I think they call that multi-tasking.

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### **Environment's Role in a Good Night's Sleep**

Mother Earth has a transition thing going on right now, and it may be affecting your good sleep.

Yep, it's springtime. Re-birth. Day after day of weather extremes. Night after night of heat-on, heat-off, windows left open then closed tight, covers on, covers off. Perhaps the pajamas need to come off when laying your head to rest, only to need them in the wee hours of the morning when the outside temperature dips 30 degrees.

Not only that, you are probably enjoying spring's days, too—getting out there, riding bikes, doing yard work, dusting the cobwebs off your fishing pole or hiking gear. Working up a sweat? For the first time since last fall?

It's all about [temperature](#), folks. And it's a good time to pay attention to what your ideal temperature for a good night's rest is, since Mother Nature is giving you so many options.

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