

# Sleep and athletics

Find information and resources to help you improve your sleep at [geisinger.org/stbw](https://www.geisinger.org/stbw)

## Sleep is essential to athletic success.

If your training regimen doesn't include sleep, it may be keeping you from making those gains you are working so hard to achieve. Poor sleep causes:

- Slower reaction times
- Impaired judgment
- Decreased accuracy
- Increased risk for injury

Poor sleep also increases production of the stress hormone cortisol and leads to less effective insulin use, higher blood sugar levels, increased food cravings and difficulty losing weight.



## The power of healthy sleep.

Stanford basketball players were asked to participate in a study looking at sleep and athletic performance. When players prioritized sleep, they ran faster, reacted more quickly and scored more points. Now that's a recipe for success!

| BASELINE  | INTERVENTION                                     | RESULTS                             |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>2 – 4 weeks</b>                                  | <b>5 – 7 weeks</b>                               | <b>More sleep =</b>                 |
| Athletes kept typical sleep schedule                | Athletes instructed to sleep as much as possible | Faster sprint times                 |
| Athletes got between 6 – 9 hours of sleep per night | No less than 10 hours of sleep per night         | Improved shooting accuracy          |
|   |  | Quicker reaction times              |
|   |  | Higher free throw percentages (+9%) |
|   |  | Higher 3 pt percentages (+9.2)      |

## Tips for getting to the top of your game by improving sleep:

- Stay hydrated
- Avoid caffeine after midday
- Avoid alcohol
- Eat a balanced diet and avoid eating late
- Keep a consistent bedtime routine
- Wind down before bed with journaling or meditation

Check out this article to learn more:

[Effects of Sleep Extension on the Athletic Performance of Collegiate Basketball Players | SLEEP | Oxford Academic \(oclc.org\)](https://www.oup.com/academic/article/doi/10.1093/academic/oaab001/6040000)

The timing of sleep — or circadian pattern — also impacts athletic performance. Check out this study to find out how circadian patterns impact NFL teams: [Impact of Circadian Misalignment on Athletic Performance in Professional Football Players | SLEEP | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](https://www.oup.com/academic/article/doi/10.1093/academic/oaab001/6040000)

Watch this video to learn more.

[Unlock your athletic potential: How quality sleep can improve your performance](#)

