



Research
Institute

Building healthy sleep habits



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



The next frontier in health prevention

Sleep is a critical health risk affecting short and long-term health including the likelihood of heart disease, diabetes, depression, and early death.

Bedtime consistency is essential for prevention. At least seven hours of sleep, commencing within a one-hour window of an established bedtime, significantly decreases risks.

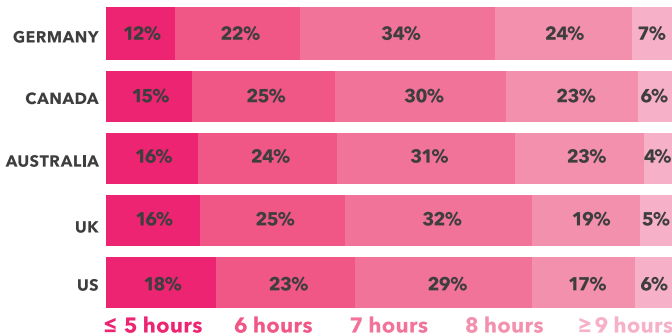
Vitality's data suggest that only 10% of people have optimal sleep patterns. Reframing sleep as a modifiable behaviour, and incentivising tracking and improvement, can lead to sustainable healthy sleep habits, yielding significant health and economic benefits.

1

One in three adults don't get enough sleep

Insufficient and irregular sleep is one of the world's most common – and underestimated – health risks. Chronic sleep loss raises the likelihood of heart disease, diabetes, depression, and early death, while eroding focus, mood and productivity.

Number of hours people sleep on a typical night (% of people)



**"Healthy sleep
patterns predict lower
risks of hospitalisation
and mortality"**

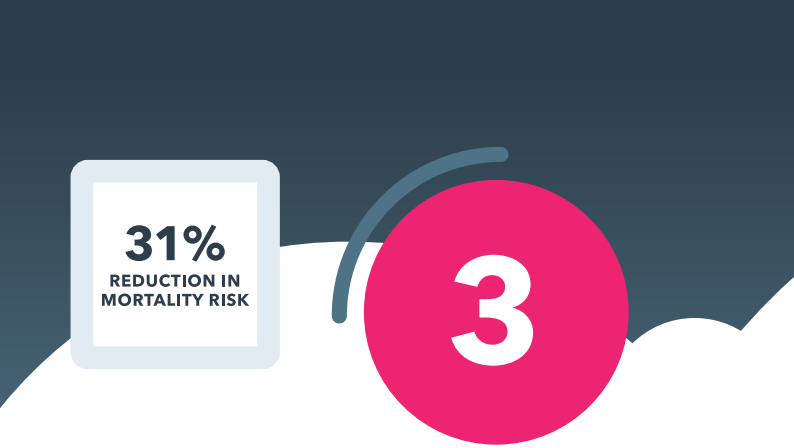
47M

**NIGHTS OF
TRACKED SLEEP**

2

**Vitality's unique dataset provides new
insights into the effects of poor sleep**

Drawing on more than 47 million nights of tracked sleep, Vitality's research shows that healthy sleep patterns predict lower risks of hospitalisation and mortality. Short or irregular sleep raises the likelihood of serious illness; regular rest protects against it.



31%
REDUCTION IN
MORTALITY RISK

A large pink circle with the number 3 inside it is positioned to the right of the 31% box. A blue curved line arches over the top of the pink circle.

3

Bedtime consistency is a strong predictor of sleep-related risk

Vitality's data shows that while getting enough sleep is important for good health, consistency of bedtime is an even stronger predictor of sleep-related risk.

Falling asleep consistently within a one-hour bedtime window lowers mortality risk and in-hospital admissions by an estimated 31% and 9% respectively.

Detrimental effects of poor sleep accumulate over time

1

Night

Increased accident risk.

1

Week

Increased hunger hormones.

1

Month

**Impaired glucose regulation
and increased blood pressure.**

6

Months

**Impaired immunity and hypertension risk,
impaired memory and focus.**

2

Years

**Substantially increased risk for obesity,
cardiovascular disease, cancer,
and mental health disorders.**

**"Up to four additional
years of life"**

UP TO
6 DAYS
PER YEAR PRODUCTIVITY
LOSS REDUCTION

4

**Better sleep improves health, longevity,
and productivity**

Healthy sleep habits can add up to four additional years of life and improve quality of life throughout. Further, they can reduce productivity loss due to absence and presenteeism by up to six days per year.

“...it is behaviour that can be measured, practiced, and improved”



Sleep is a behaviour that can be incentivised

For many people, poor sleep stems not from disorder but routine. Like exercise or diet, it is a behaviour that can be measured, practised, and improved. Recognising this reframes sleep from a passive state to an active behaviour – one that can be shaped through nudges, feedback, and incentives.



6

Technology makes sleep measurable and habit formation easier

Advances in wearables now make it possible to monitor sleep duration, regularity, and quality at scale. Real-time feedback helps people recognise patterns, set goals, and adjust routines – turning awareness into action. Consistent tracking supports the small, repeated behaviours that build sustainable healthy sleep habits.

**"7-1: seven hours of sleep,
commencing within a
one-hour window of an
established bedtime"**



7

**A new 7-1 rule turns complex science into
simple actions**

Promoting an easy-to-understand heuristic – seven hours of sleep, commencing within a one-hour window of an established bedtime – aligns circadian rhythms, promotes recovery, and builds automaticity. In this way, duration and consistency form the foundations of healthy sleep patterns.



8

Sleep is the next frontier of prevention

Integrating sleep into wellness, insurance, and policy frameworks offers measurable returns. An actionable heuristic, coupled with incentives, digital tools, and supportive environments can make good sleep the easy default. Insurers are uniquely positioned to deliver behaviour change in sleep patterns at scale.

Sources: Vitality analysis, 2025. Vitality Group International, Inc. In collaboration with London School of Economics.

"Sleep is the most effective way to reset our brain and body each day. There is no organ system in the body, or any operation in our mind, that isn't enhanced by good sleep and impaired by poor sleep. Sleep influences everything from cardiovascular and metabolic function to mental well-being. Regular, sufficient sleep, seven to eight hours per night, with consistent bed and wake times, is not only restorative but also preventative.

By incentivising healthy sleep habits, Discovery and Vitality are taking a science-backed step towards improving long-term health and reducing the risk of chronic disease. I am thrilled to be partnering with Discovery and Vitality on this journey to empower their members with better sleep health."

Dr Matthew Walker

Professor of neuroscience and psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, and the founder and director of the Center for Human Sleep Science.

