Breathing & Sleeping Your Way Through the Covid-19 Crisis

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By Nancy H. Rothstein, MBA, As The Sleep Ambassador® and Director of Sleep Health at Resonae, sleep expert Nancy Rothstein is on a quest to help people live life fully 24/7.

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Proper breathing and sufficient sleep. We are here to offer some tips to help you navigate these times, hoping that our recommendations become inscribed in your way of living for a healthy and happy life.

BREATHING: How & Why

From Ed Harrold, Author, Educator, Consultant

Let's start with your breathing. At a time when you may be feeling a bit nervous about inhaling fear for what you may be inhaling, here are some simple tools and strategies, to remain calm, strengthen your immune system and reduce the risk of unhealthy invaders entering your body.

I begin by explaining why breathing through your nose and not your mouth is key. When we inhale oxygen through our nose, we have a built-in protective system that filters the air of toxins and bacteria. Our nostrils are lined with tiny hairs called cilia that protect our body from roughly 20 billion foreign invaders per day. Yes, 20 billion per day! They are quite busy keeping our lungs clear of air borne bacteria and viruses like Covid-19.

The second benefit of nasal diaphragmatic breathing is the production of nitric oxide. Nitric oxide combats harmful bacteria and viruses in our bodies and boosts the immune system; among other things. The filtering benefits from the cilia and the release of Nitric Oxide ONLY happen with nasal Diaphragmatic Breathing; not mouth breathing.

If these two things weren't enough, the key to reducing anxiety and stress during challenging times is controlling the length, depth, and pace of our nasal breath. Breathing rates and patterns signal our brain to behave in the stress response or the relaxation response. When we breathe at a rate of 12 breaths or more per minute, we signal the stress response. When we breathe at a rate of 10 breaths or less per minute, we signal the relaxation response.

When your mind is becoming agitated, fearful and nervous, an easy tool to access to calm yourself is your breath. I recommend diaphragmatically breathing with an ocean sound from at a pace of 10 breaths or less per minute. The Ocean Sounding breath is a great compliment to the Diaphragmatic breath as it helps introvert the mind, reduces inflammation and helps you improve your breathing rate and pattern.

Apply "breath as medicine" in your self-care routines to remain vibrant and healthy. For more instruction, please see: Life With Breath.

SLEEP: Preventive Medicine for Optimal Health & Living

From Nancy H. Rothstein, MBA, The Sleep Ambassador®

Sleep is essential for life. Period. Yet, millions of people struggle to get the sleep quality and quantity they need. In stressful times such as these, adding concerns and fears to our already demanding lives can result in compromised sleep. However, as research confirms, insufficient sleep places us at heightened risks for illnesses such as the common cold and the flu, both of which are forms of corona virus. Recognizing this newest corona virus, Covid-19, and the unknowns about its contagious properties and when/where it may arise, it's all the more important to keep your immune system hard at work to keep you well should you be exposed to the Covid-19, or any virus or illness for that matter.
Here are a few tips from sleep expert Nancy H. Rothstein, The Sleep Ambassador®, to help you navigate your nights with good, restorative sleep.

- For adults, get 7-9 hours of sleep each night, keeping a consistent sleep and wake time to maintain the optimal functioning of your circadian rhythm, which has an important influence on your health.
- Tune out from technology, especially the news, an hour before you plan to go to sleep to allow your brain and body to transition to sustainable sleep in peace.
- Stay hydrated during the day and eat healthy foods to support your health. However, don’t drink alcohol, consume caffeine, or eat a big meal within at least 3-4 hours before bedtime as this can compromise your sleep quality.
- Incorporate a mindfulness practice once in bed to transition to sleep in peace such as a gratitude ritual or breathing technique to fall asleep or help you fall back asleep.
- Make sleep a priority so you can live at your best and in good health. If you need a pathway to sleep improvement, consider engaging in the Sleep Well/Live Well program.

Staying healthy in times such as these, both physically and mentally, can be challenging for many people. Proper breathing and sufficient sleep can help you maintain your well-being, support your immune system, and mitigate the impact of stress and risk of becoming sick.

Prevention through proper breathing and good sleep may be just the medicine you need to navigate the waves of the unknown. That said, if you are experiencing breathing challenges or suspect you are at risk for a sleep disorder, please seek medical attention for assessment and treatment.

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BREATHE, BREATHE, BREATHING, CORONAVIRUS, COVID-19, HEALTH, HEALTHY SLEEP, PREVENTATIVE CARE, PREVENTION GUIDELINES, SLEEP, SLEEPING, SLEEPING HABITS, STRESSFUL SLEEP

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As The Sleep Ambassador®, and Director of Sleep Health at Resonea, Nancy inspires a new respect for sleep and its impact on all aspects of work, life and well-being. Through consulting, public speaking, media engagements and other venues, she presents strategic solutions selected to empower people to make lasting shifts to optimize their sleep quality and quantity, both for the public and for the corporate world. Nancy consults and lectures to Fortune 500 corporations and other organizations, awakening leadership to the ROI of a good night’s sleep for their workforce and providing sleep education/training initiatives for employees at all levels. Nancy serves or served on the NIH Sleep Disorders Research Advisory Board, the Steering Committee of Myapnea.org, the Board of the Foundation for Airway Health, the Advisory Board of the Academy of Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy, the American Sleep Apnea Association, and working with other organizations that foster sleep health. Nancy is the author of My Daddy Snores; published by Scholastic, it has sold over 400,000 copies. Not only does Nancy help people rise in the morning, she also helps people rise from mourning, helping people live life with gratitude amidst the challenges that accompany life; lessons that are reflected in her forthcoming book, "Rising in the Mourning: Ways to Celebrate Life," based on her personal experience with the death of...and reconnection with...her son.

Nancy has a B.A. from The University of Pennsylvania and an M.B.A. from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

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