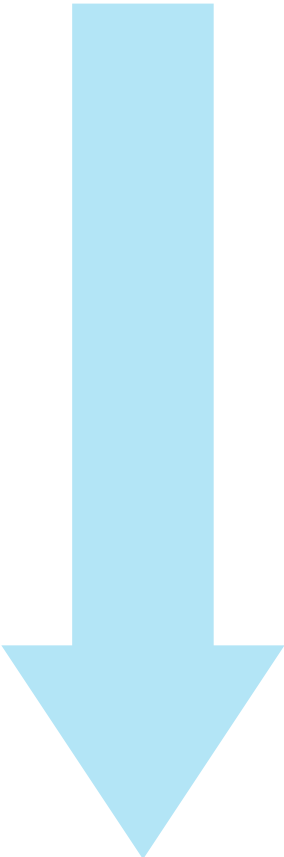


PAY OFF YOUR DEBT

Dreaming of a Good Night's Sleep

Whether the cause is a sleep disorder, less than perfect sleep hygiene, or simply a busy life, it's easy to rack up sleep debt. Like most debt, sleep debt doesn't go away on its own. It can affect your ability to focus and be at your best. How can you pay off the debt?



Installment plan. Avoid only using the weekends to catch up on sleep, which can have negative health impacts. Instead, pay down modest amounts of sleep debt in small steps by building an extra 15 to 30 minutes of sleep into your schedule at a time. On weekdays that may mean making yourself go to bed a bit earlier. On weekends you may have the option of sleeping in as well. But don't go more than two hours past your normal wake time or you risk shifting your sleep-wake cycle. This will cause you to have trouble waking on time in the coming week.

A small down payment. Daytime naps can help offset sleep debt. However, they are less effective than nighttime sleep because less time is spent in restorative deep sleep. If you do nap, limit it to 20 minutes and plan to wake up before 1 p.m. to avoid interfering with quality nighttime sleep.

Break open the bank. Major sleep debt may require drastic action. If you are committed to getting back on track, try an alarm-free sleep vacation. Go to bed at the same time every night and allow your body to awaken naturally in the morning. You won't need to repay one hour for every hour lost, but it still may take a couple of weeks to gradually pay off the debt. In the process, you will also discover the amount of sleep your body naturally requires.

Stay debt free. Going forward, make sleep the priority it should be. Plan to get enough sleep on a regular basis and schedule accordingly. Address any sleep disorders and be sure to correct any poor sleep habits that have caused you problems in the past.

Reference: Newson, R. & Rehman, A. (2023, August 14). *Sleep debt and catching up on sleep*. Sleep Foundation. www.sleepfoundation.org/how-sleep-works/sleep-debt-and-catch-up-sleep

Abramson, A. (2023, April 24). *Sleep deprivation is unhealthy. These strategies can help overcome it*. The Washington Post. www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/2023/04/24/sleep-deprivation-recovery/

Together, all the way.®



This material is provided by Cigna for informational/educational purposes only. It is not intended as medical/clinical advice. Only a health care professional can make a diagnosis or recommend a treatment plan. For more information about your behavioral health coverage, you can call the customer service or the behavioral health telephone number listed on your health care identification card.

All Cigna products and services are provided exclusively by or through operating subsidiaries of Cigna Corporation. Use and distribution limited solely to authorized personnel. 857293c 10/23 © 2023 Cigna