**SLEEP AND ITS EFFECTS ON PERFORMANCE**

**FACTS ABOUT SLEEP:**
- Sleep occurs in cycles throughout the night and we should go through 4-5 cycles a night.
- Deep sleep occurs every night and allows for human growth and assists in memory.
- REM (rapid eye movement) sleep occurs every night in between our sleep cycles, about every 90-120 minutes.
  - Towards the early morning our REM sleep periods get longer
- During the day it’s natural that our body gets tired the longer we are awake, this is called Process S.
- During the day we also have Process C telling us not to go to sleep and fights off fatigue.
- Our Alertness = Process S – Process C

**SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF LACK OF SLEEP ON PERFORMANCE:**
- Lack of concentration
- Attention deficits
- Reduced vigilance
- Longer reaction times
- Distractibility
- Lack of energy
- Fatigue
- Restlessness
- Lack of coordination
- Poor decisions
- Increased errors
- Forgetfulness

**TIPS ON MAXIMIZING SLEEP TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE:**
- **Don’t go to bed unless you are sleepy.**
  If you are not sleepy at bedtime, then do something else. Read a book, listen to soft music or browse through a magazine. Find something relaxing, but not stimulating, to take your mind off of worries about sleep. This will relax your body and distract your mind.
- **If you are not asleep after 20 minutes, then get out of the bed.**
  Find something else to do that will make you feel relaxed. If you can, do this in another room. Your bedroom should be where you go to sleep. It is not a place to go when you are bored. Once you feel sleepy again, go back to bed.
- **Begin rituals that help you relax each night before bed.**
  This can include such things as a warm bath, light snack or a few minutes of reading.
- **Get up at the same time every morning.**
  Do this even on weekends and holidays.
- **Get a full night’s sleep on a regular basis.**
  Get enough sleep so that you feel well-rested nearly every day.
- **Avoid taking naps if you can.**
  If you must take a nap, try to keep it short (less than one hour). Never take a nap after 3 p.m.
- **Keep a regular schedule.**
  Regular times for meals, medications, chores, and other activities help keep the inner body clock running smoothly.
- **Don’t read, write, eat, watch TV, talk on the phone, or play cards in bed.**
- **Do not have any caffeine after lunch.**
- **Do not have a beer, a glass of wine, or any other alcohol within six hours of your bedtime.**
- **Do not have a cigarette or any other source of nicotine before bedtime.**
- **Do not go to bed hungry, but don’t eat a big meal near bedtime either.**
- **Avoid any tough exercise within six hours of your bedtime.**
  You should exercise on a regular basis, but do it earlier in the day.
- **Avoid sleeping pills, or use them cautiously.**
  Most doctors do not prescribe sleeping pills for periods of more than three weeks. Do not drink alcohol while taking sleeping pills.
- **Try to get rid of or deal with things that make you worry.**
  If you are unable to do this, then find a time during the day to get all of your worries out of your system. Your bed is a place to rest, not a place to worry.
- **Make your bedroom quiet, dark, and a little bit cool.**

These are only suggestions to help improve your sleep habits. If you are having trouble sleeping find the one thing you do that is the most wrong or most likely the culprit of why you are getting a lack of sleep, and change that first! Changing one habit at a time is a more realistic goal and can be easily achieved. Avoid changing your whole routine at one time, instead focus on improving small parts of your nightly routine and see how your daily performance improves.

To find more help or tips on improving your sleep go to http://yoursleep.aasmnet.org