

Are You Getting Enough Sleep?

- 1 What happens if you don't get enough sleep? Randy Gardner, a **high school** student in the United States, wanted to find out. He designed an experiment¹ on the effects of sleeplessness² for a school science project. With Dr. William C. Dement from **Stanford University** and two friends
5 watching him carefully, Gardner stayed awake for 264 hours and 12 minutes. That's eleven days and nights without sleep!

What effect did sleeplessness have on Gardner?

- After 24 hours without sleep, Gardner started having trouble reading and watching television. The words
10 and pictures were too blurry. By the third day, he was having trouble doing things with his hands. By the fourth day, Gardner was hallucinating. For example, when he saw a street sign, he thought it was a person. He also imagined he was a famous **football** player.
15 Over the next few days, Gardner's speech³ became so slurred that people couldn't understand him. He also had trouble remembering things. By the eleventh day, Gardner couldn't pass a counting test.⁴ In the middle of the test he simply stopped counting. He couldn't
20 remember what he was doing.

When Gardner finally went to bed, he slept for 14 hours and 45 minutes. The second night he slept for twelve hours, the third night he slept for ten and one-half hours, and by the fourth night, he had returned to his normal sleep schedule.

- 25 Even though Gardner recovered quickly, scientists believe that going without sleep can be dangerous. They say that people should not repeat Randy's experiment. Tests on white rats have shown how serious sleeplessness can be. After a few weeks without sleep, the rats started losing fur.⁵ And even though the rats ate more food than usual, they lost
30 weight. Eventually,⁶ the rats died.

¹ **experiment** a scientific test

² **effects of sleeplessness** things that happen when you don't get enough sleep

³ **speech** way of talking

⁴ **a counting test** a test of saying numbers in order: 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.

⁵ **fur** hair on an animal's body

⁶ **eventually** after some time

Has anyone stayed awake longer than Randy Gardner? Yes! According to **The Guinness Book of World Records**, Maureen Weston from the United Kingdom holds the record for staying awake the longest. She went 449 hours without sleep in 1977. That's 18 days and 17 hours!

- 35 During your lifetime, you will likely spend 25 years or more sleeping. But why? What is the purpose of sleep? Surprisingly, scientists don't know for sure.⁷ Scientists used to think we "turned our brains off" when we went to sleep. Sleep researchers now know, however, that our brains are very active when we sleep. Some scientists think we sleep in order to replenish⁸ brain cells. Other scientists think that sleep helps the body to grow and relieve stress.⁹ Whatever the reason, we know that it is important to get enough sleep.



Word Count: 427

Reading Time: _____
(Minutes)

Words per Minute: _____
(Word Count/Reading Time)

About Sleep

Each night, we pass through¹⁰ five stages, or periods, of sleep. In Stage 1, we fall asleep. We sleep lightly in Stage 2. We have deep, or sound, sleep in Stages 3 and 4. Stage 5—REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep—is the most interesting stage. This is the time when we dream. These stages last about one and one-half hours. After each REM stage, we return to Stage 2 (light sleep) and begin the cycle again.

STAGE 1: *Falling asleep.*



20 min

STAGE 2: *Light sleep.*



45 min

STAGES 3 AND 4: *Deep, slow-wave sleep.*



60 min



90 min

REM: *Dreaming stage.*



⁷ for sure definitely

⁸ replenish build new; renew

⁹ relieve stress remove or get rid of tense feelings

¹⁰ pass through experience

A. Comprehension: Scanning for Details

Read each statement below and check (✓) True or False.

	True	False
1. Randy Gardner was a university student when he did his experiment.	☐	☐
2. During the experiment, Gardner slept for several hours every night.	☐	☐
3. During the experiment, Gardner had trouble speaking clearly.	☐	☐
4. It took two weeks for Gardner to recover from the experiment.	☐	☐
5. Going without sleep is not dangerous for white rats.	☐	☐
6. Maureen Weston stayed awake a little over seven and one-half days longer than Gardner.	☐	☐
7. The author does not tell us how Gardner stayed awake for eleven days.	☐	☐
8. According to this article, scientists are not sure why we need to sleep.	☐	☐

B. Vocabulary

Underline these words in the reading passage on pages 3–4. Then match each word with its definition to the right.

1. ____ blurry	a. seeing things that aren't really there
2. ____ eventually	b. not sounding clear
3. ____ experiment	c. test done to prove something
4. ____ hallucinating	d. talking
5. ____ slurred	e. not looking clear
6. ____ speech	f. after a long time

Building Vocabulary

- A. Use the words in the box below to form collocations and complete the sentences.

enough	fall	schedule	soundly	to	without
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1. What time do you usually go _____ sleep?
2. What time did you go _____ sleep last night?
3. How long does it take you to _____ asleep?
4. How long can you go _____ sleep?
5. Do you usually get _____ sleep on weeknights?
6. Do you sleep _____ every night?
7. Do you have a regular or irregular sleep _____?
8. Do you have the same sleep _____ every day?