

Wellness Wednesday



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New Study Finds Another Big Reason Why You Should Get More Sleep

Feeling lonely is a common human experience, with research indicating that around one-third of adults in the United States report feeling lonely at least once a week. While loneliness can stem from various factors, a recent study has uncovered a surprising connection between sleep health and feelings of isolation. By delving into the intricate relationship between rest and social well-being, this Wellness Wednesday aims to shed light on why getting sufficient, quality sleep may be a crucial step in combating loneliness.



The Link Between Sleep and Loneliness

A study presented in June 2022 analyzed the sleep patterns and loneliness levels of over 2,000 U.S. adults. The findings revealed a strong correlation between better sleep health and reduced feelings of loneliness, particularly in the realm of emotional loneliness – the sense of missing an intimate connection, such as with a partner. Interestingly, this relationship was more pronounced among younger adults, although the exact reasons for this age-based distinction require further investigation.

Defining Emotional and Social Loneliness

The study utilized the De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale to assess participants' levels of loneliness. This scale distinguishes between two distinct dimensions of loneliness: emotional and social. Emotional loneliness refers to the absence of a close, intimate relationship, while social loneliness stems from a lack of a broader social network.

The Bidirectional Relationship

Sleep experts suggest that the link between sleep and loneliness is a bidirectional one. On one hand, poor sleep can contribute to feelings of isolation and disconnection, as individuals may be less inclined to engage in social interactions when they are fatigued or experiencing mood and anxiety issues. On the other hand, loneliness itself can also disrupt sleep patterns, creating a cyclical dynamic that exacerbates both conditions.

Mechanisms Linking Sleep and Loneliness

Researchers have identified several potential mechanisms that explain how sleep quality can influence an individual's emotional and social well-being.

Reduced Social Motivation

When individuals are not well-rested, they may be less interested in interacting with others and more likely to withdraw from social situations. This decreased motivation to engage with their social circles can further perpetuate feelings of loneliness.

Emotional Processing and Mood Regulation

Adequate sleep plays a crucial role in the brain's ability to process emotional memories and regulate mood. During the rapid eye movement (REM) stage of sleep, the brain consolidates and integrates emotional experiences from the day. Disruptions to this stage can lead to increased mood and anxiety problems, which can then shape how individuals perceive and interpret their social interactions, potentially contributing to a sense of isolation.

Irritability and Empathy

Lack of sleep can also make individuals more irritable and less empathetic, which can negatively impact their social relationships. When people are fatigued, they may be more likely to interpret others' actions or words through a negative lens, leading to feelings of not being understood or accepted by their social circles.

Strategies for Improving Sleep and Reducing Loneliness

Given the bidirectional relationship between sleep and loneliness, incorporating healthy sleep habits can be a powerful tool in addressing feelings of isolation. Here are some evidence-based strategies to consider:

Maintain a Consistent Wake-Up Time

Establishing a regular wake-up time, even on weekends, can help regulate the body's internal clock, known as the circadian rhythm. This rhythm is a crucial cue for the body to feel sleepy in the evening and alert in the morning, promoting better sleep quality.

Seek Morning Sunlight Exposure

Exposure to natural light, particularly in the morning, can help reset the circadian rhythm and keep it on track. Spending at least 15 minutes outside or in well-lit indoor spaces can provide the necessary light input for the brain to synchronize the body's sleep-wake cycle.

Manage Stress and Engage in Relaxation Practices

Stress is a common culprit for disrupted sleep. Incorporating stress-reducing activities, such as mindfulness exercises, deep breathing, or progressive muscle relaxation, can help lower arousal levels and promote better sleep.

Minimize Daytime Napping

While napping can be tempting when feeling fatigued, it can actually deplete the body's natural sleep drive, making it more difficult to fall asleep at night. Limiting or avoiding daytime naps can help maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle.

Seek Professional Support for Persistent Loneliness

It's important to note that for some individuals, general wellness guidelines may not be enough to address persistent feelings of loneliness. In such cases, seeking the guidance of a mental health professional, such as a therapist, can be beneficial in developing personalized strategies to overcome this challenge.

By prioritizing quality sleep, individuals may be able to experience a reduction in emotional and social isolation, ultimately fostering a greater sense of connection and well-being. As we continue to navigate the complexities of modern life, integrating healthy sleep habits into our routines can be a powerful step towards mitigating the detrimental effects of loneliness and cultivating a more fulfilling, socially engaged existence.



BASIL GREEN GODDESS DRESSING



INGREDIENTS

Ingredients

1/2 cup light mayonnaise, such as Hellmann's (regular for Keto)
1/2 cup scallions, chopped
1/2 cup chopped fresh basil, packed
1/8 cup fresh squeezed lemon juice, 1 lemon
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 tsp kosher salt
1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
1 tsp anchovy paste
1/2 cup light sour cream, full fat for Keto

In the realm of salad dressings, there's one that stands out as a true showstopper – the Basil Green Goddess Dressing. This creamy, herbaceous delight is not only a feast for the taste buds but also a visual masterpiece, adding a vibrant pop of color and an irresistible flavor to any salad. Whether you're looking to revamp your lunchtime greens or impress your guests with a gourmet touch, this dressing is the perfect solution.

THE ORIGINS OF GREEN GODDESS DRESSING

The origins of Green Goddess Dressing can be traced back to the early 20th century, when it was first created at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. This classic dressing was named after the 1920s play "The Green Goddess," which was a popular production at the time. The original recipe featured a blend of mayonnaise, sour cream, anchovies, garlic, and a variety of fresh herbs, including parsley, chives, and tarragon.

THE BASIL TWIST

While the traditional Green Goddess Dressing is undoubtedly delicious, the addition of fresh basil takes this recipe to new heights. The vibrant, aromatic herb adds a unique flavor profile that perfectly complements the creamy base, creating a dressing that is both refreshing and indulgent. This basil-infused version is a true celebration of the summer season, when the herb is at its peak.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 2 tbsp, Calories: 60.3 kcal, Carbohydrates: 2.9 g, Protein: 1.3 g, Fat: 4.9 g, Fiber: 0.3 g



INSTRUCTIONS



HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Place all ingredients except for sour cream in a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Add sour cream and process until blended.
3. Keep refrigerated until serving.

HERB VARIATIONS

While basil is the star of this particular recipe, the beauty of Green Goddess Dressing lies in its adaptability. Feel free to experiment with different herb combinations, such as a blend of parsley, chives, tarragon, and cilantro, to create your own unique flavor profile. The options are endless, allowing you to cater to your personal taste preferences.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

The versatility of Basil Green Goddess Dressing extends to its ability to complement a wide range of salad ingredients. Try drizzling it over a wedge of crisp iceberg lettuce, paired with juicy heirloom tomatoes for a classic summer salad. You can also use it as a dressing for grain bowls, featuring quinoa, chickpeas, and roasted vegetables. The possibilities are truly endless.

<https://www.bodybuilding.com/content/essential-8-exercises-to-get-ripped.html>

Featured Exercise ► Dips

HOW TO DO IT:

- Begin by positioning your hands shoulder-width apart on the dip bars, with your arms extended and your body suspended above the ground.
- Engage your core by tightening your abdominal muscles, and keep your shoulders pulled back and down, avoiding any shrugging or rounding of the upper back.
- Initiate the movement by bending at the elbows, lowering your body until your shoulders are slightly below the level of your elbows.
- Pause briefly at the bottom of the movement, then push back up to the starting position, fully extending your arms.
- Maintain a slight forward lean throughout the exercise, and be mindful of keeping your chest up and your neck in a neutral position.



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THE BENEFITS:

Dips are the best exercise you can do for your triceps. Beginners can start off doing bench dips—dips with their hands on a bench and their feet on the floor. Graduate to body weight dips on the dip bars. The experienced trainee can add weight to their dips by either holding a dumbbell between their feet or hanging a plate on a chain on a weight belt.

Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



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