

Pathways to Sleep IA. From Health to Sleep

Introduction to Component One

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This is probably the most important of the four components. However, all (or most) of the pathways associated with this component have an elusive and often indirect impact on sleep quality. This first component is elusive because most of these pathways involve the whole body and the whole day (and for that matter one's entire life). Using fancier terms, these pathways tend to be holistic in nature and impact in a systemic manner. Many of these component one pathways are also likely to have an indirect impact on sleep quality. It's like a billiard table – there are a lot of impacts that bounce off one wall (e.g. the heart) and then off a second wall (e.g. the impact of shifting heart rate on one's capacity to relax) and finally drop into the intended pocket (quality of sleep).

It gets even more indirect (and complicated) because the impact might be delayed by many hours. For example, our exercise in the morning can influence our ability to fall asleep many hours later. One can rightfully ask: how does all of this work? Why does something I do to my body in the early morning (exercise) somehow influence what happens to my body many hours later (as I am attempting to fall asleep)? I am not going to get into much detail about the physiological mechanisms involved—given that this isn't a neurophysiology course (and frankly I am no expert on these matters). I will present a few ideas regarding how this delay mechanism works as a way of helping us all come to appreciate the power inherent in many of the pathways associated with component one.

Component One Assessments

I will be providing an overall assessment regarding each of the four components. In several cases, the assessment will be controversial. There will be high levels of variance in the ratings of experts and users – and every major variance regarding cost and accessibility. This is NOT the case with the first component. This is the most obvious and most often recommended set of pathways to sleep. Following is this overall assessment:

Highly rated by experts

Highly rated by users

Cost: not much in terms of cash outlay; but can be quite “costly” in terms of time spent being healthy.

Access: it's your body and you can take care of it if you choose: thus, highly accessible in most instances

Component One Pathway Matrix

Having offered this overview of the ratings associated with most of the Component One pathways, I will share with you the latest version of the Component One Pathways (November 7, 2019). This matrix will be frequently updated as more research is being reported and more data is collected regarding user ratings. I will also be providing similar matrices for the other three components.

Here are the first set of matrices. They are focused on general health issues--both ways to remain healthy and ways to confront health challenges (specifically time zone shifts and allergies).

Pathway	Sub-Pathway	Expert Rating	User Rating	User Cost	User Access
Exercise		3	3	1	1
Mindfulness		2.5	3	1	1
Stress Reduction		3	3	1	1
Planning for Time Zone Shifts When Traveling	Scheduling Sleep Gradually Toward Destination Time Zone	2	2	1	1
Planning for Time Zone Shifts When Traveling	Preparing and Executing Plan for Sleeping on Transportation Vehicle (such as Airplane)	2	2v	1	1
Addressing Problems Associated with Allergies	Take Allergy Medications [Prescription]	2	2	2	2
Addressing Problems Associated with Allergies	Take Allergy Medications [Over-the Counter: Non-Prescription]	1	2v	1	1
Addressing Problems Associated with Allergies	Clear Nostrils with Nasal Wash	2	2	2v	1
Addressing Problems Associated with Allergies	Prepare strategy for addressing sneezing and coughing when in bed	2	3	1	1

This second set of matrices concern the ways in which we align with our natural daily cycles and our nutritional habits.

Pathway	Subpathway	Expert Rating	User Rating	User Cost	User Access
Sleep Cycle	Discover Your Own Sleep Cycle	2.5	2	1	1
Sleep Cycle	Establish Regular Time Going to Bed Based on Cycle	2.5	2.5	1	1
Abstain from Alcohol (Avoid Six Hours Later Wake Up: Withdrawal from Alcohol)		2.5	2.5	1	1
Reduce Caffeine (None after 1pm)		2.5	2.75	1	1
Earlier Meal Time (Six-Hour Digestion Period)HourHour Digestion Peirod)		2.5	2	1	1
Eat Foods with Sleep-Inducing Properties	Turkey (Tryptophan)	2	2.5	1.5	1
Eat Foods with Sleep-Inducing Properties	Cherry Juice	1.5	1.5	1.5	1

Conclusions

Having shared this overall assessment of component one and having posed a preliminary observation regarding the holistic, systemic and often indirect and delayed impact of many component one pathways on sleep quality, we are ready to turn to each of the specific pathways and identify specific assessments for this pathway. We will also provide a more detailed understanding of its specific impact and ways in which we can best engage this pathway as we seek to manage our own sleep.