



Olivia Mae Ellis wanted to stay awake long enough to meet you all but thought she might have time for a quick nap while her mother (Katy) and dad (Dr. Ellis) got her ready for a photo shoot.

Ready for a fresh start?

A brand new baby definitely has some natural limitations but they can teach us a thing or two about sleeping. Not in the sense that they necessarily sleep at the appropriate time or demonstrate the recommended 7-to-9-hour sleep pattern, but when they actually *do* sleep, their instinctive dedication to proper form is impressive. Just look at Olivia in the photo above: completely relaxed in a deep sleep, which gives her brain cells a chance to process the multi-syllable words she hears from her dad, yet you'll notice her arms and legs are slightly bent in preparation for another workout as soon as she wakes up again. Excellent form, Olivia!

Let's sleep like a baby

We grown-ups would do well to recover that effortless ability to sleep. A lot happens while we're sleeping that is critical to short-term performance as well as long-term health. Both our brains and our bodies need the cell repair and hormone regulation accomplished during sleep. The goal is not just *more* sleep; the goal is *adequate* sleep, which is 7–9 hours.

11 consequences of sleep deprivation*

- Higher death rates¹
- Heart disease and stroke²
- Insulin resistance and diabetes³
- Depression
- Obesity⁴
- Higher blood pressure⁵
- More coronary artery calcification⁶ (a measure of arterial damage)
- Decreased mental performance
- Higher levels of inflammation
- Susceptibility to infection⁷
- Impaired driving and cognitive skills

(* However, Dr. Ellis assures us that a 2 am rendezvous with a 2-month old can be much sweeter than sleep!)

Prescription for a better sleep

If counting sheep doesn't work for you, try counting syllables – it works for Olivia! Here are some other ideas; (For an expanded discussion on sleep, see pages 75–76 in *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 4th edition.)

- **Have a consistent routine** with sleep and wake times.
- **Avoid daytime naps** as a general rule.
- **Avoid afternoon or evening caffeine.**
- **Check all prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and supplements:** they may be to blame for your insomnia.
- **Keep the bedroom as cool as possible.**
- **Restrict alcohol** – it acts as both stimulant and depressant, with an unpredictable effect on sleep.
- **Avoid screen time** after dinner.
- **Remove television and other electronic devices** from the bedroom, and keep it as dark as possible.
- **Take a long deep hot bath** in the evening.
- **Get daily exercise**, preferably in the first half of the day. (Close to bedtime can make sleeping difficult.)
- **If all else fails**, reread those consequences of sleep deprivation – you might just scare yourself to sleep!

¹ Parthasarathy, S. et al. *Am J Med* 2015;128:268-75

² Hoevenaar-Blom, M.P. et al. *Eur J Prev Cardiol* 2014;21:1367-75 (MORGEN study)

³ Liu, A. et al. *Metabolism* 2013;62:1553-6

⁴ Aziz, M. et al. *Metab Syndr Relat Disord* 2016;doi:10.1089

⁵ St-Onge, M.P. et al. *Circulation* 2016;134:e367-e86

⁶ Kim, C. W. et al. *Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol* 2015;35:2238-45

⁷ Prather, A. and Leung, C. *JAMA Int Med* 2016;176:850-1

Watch out for “sleeping pills”

- Common prescription sleeping medications studied retrospectively – especially benzodiazepines such as *alprazolam*, *lorazepam*, and *clonazepam*, as well as multiple types of over-the-counter sleeping aids, are associated with higher death risk in many studies.^{8,9}
- After taking a sleeping pill, many people have significantly impaired skills in activities such as driving.¹⁰ The risk is likely greater for those over 65 years old.¹¹

Let’s move those arms and legs!

Exercise is a broad immune booster as well as a sleep aid, and most of us reading this are more coordinated than when we were Olivia’s age, and can swing our limbs in a more purposeful way – like walking. Evidence continues to support the good old 30-minute walk – and we all feel better after inhaling fresh air and loosening up our quads and hamstrings. If the rain is sideways, a few minutes of skipping rope or climbing stairs works, too; there are huge health benefits from squeezing in little bits of short duration exercise, even just one minute duration. Not only does it help keep us in the exercise habit, but it significantly improves immune function and blood sugar, and has potent antioxidant properties, as well. In the case of older adults, it makes their cells act more like those of young people.¹² Just think! True anti-aging without Botox or pills! (See pages 70–74.)

Coffee and tea: historically healthy habits

The coffee or tea that many of us use to begin the day is not simply jet fuel, but is actually a habit we can enjoy with a certain degree of self-righteousness. We hasten to add a caveat, however: this applies only to traditional tea and coffee, not cans of caffeine-fortified “energy” or the candy-bar-in-a-cup versions with sweetened white fluff. No, the ingredient list on our coffee or tea should be only coffee beans or tea leaves, to which we might add some other whole food like milk or cream, and as little sweetener (see pages 62–64) as possible. As with all whole foods, the nutritional and biochemical analyses of coffee and tea is extremely complex, but the outcomes data are compelling.¹³ For example, 2–3 cups of coffee or tea per day are associated with:

- Less high blood pressure and diabetes
- Less heart disease, heart failure and stroke
- Less atrial fibrillation
- Lower all-cause death rate
- Better weight control

So. . . .put the kettle on!

⁸ Lan, T.Y. et al. PLoS ONE 2015;10:e0145271

⁹ Kripke, D. Drug Saf 2016;39:93-107

¹⁰ Kuehn, B.M. JAMA 2013;309:645-6

¹¹ Fitzgerald, T. and Vietri, J. Sleep Dis 2015;doi:10.1155

¹² Prospective randomized study. Bartlett, D. et al. Frontiers in Immunology. 2020;11:729

¹³ Literature review D. Chieng and P.M. Kistler Trends in Cardiovascular Medicine 2021

Roasted Asparagus

(See pages 176–177 of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 4th edition for more about roasting asparagus and other vegetables.)

A feast of roasted asparagus is one of our favorite things about spring. . . and a good friend of last-minute cooks! Look for asparagus with tightly-furled heads. Sniff: there should be almost no smell. If you are not going to use them the same day, store them upright like a bouquet of flowers in the refrigerator, stem-ends in about ¼ inch of water in a jug style container.

1 – 2 bunches of asparagus
extra-virgin olive oil
salt

Have ready a big enough sheet pan for the asparagus to be in a single layer. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

1. To remove the tough ends, bend each spear while holding both the middle and the stem end; it will snap just above the woody end. Clean in a bath of cold water.
2. Drain and pat dry, and coat with extra-virgin olive oil. An easy method is to heap them up on the roasting pan, drizzle with a few tablespoons of oil, and use your hands to coat the spears with oil.
3. Spread asparagus in the pan (crowding is fine, but one layer only), sprinkle with salt, and roast in the top third of the oven for 8 – 10 minutes for slim asparagus and 12–14 minutes for fat spears. The timing obviously depends on whether you prefer your asparagus tender-crisp or soft.
4. Eat freshly cooked, or as a late night snack, or for lunch the next day. Irresistible with a side of *Rich Yogurt Aioli* (page 156).

Speaking events and classes

3/16/2022 – Providence St. Vincent Medical Center Resident

Lecture: Miles Hassell MD: *Highpoints of Nutritional Supplementation*. Portland, OR.

4/21/2022 – Providence St. Vincent Medical Center Resident

Lecture: Miles Hassell MD: *Type 2 Diabetes and Insulin Resistance Reversal*. Portland, OR.

5/15/2022 – Village Baptist Church Elder Care Series: Miles

Hassell MD: *The Lifestyle Prescription for Aging Gracefully*. Beaverton, OR.

6/7/2022 – Portland Providence Grand Rounds: Miles Hassell

MD: *The Lifestyle Prescription: Still the Best Medicine!* Portland, OR.

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“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”
1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)