

Wanna Lose Weight? Then Go to Bed!

November 22nd, 2010

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What I Learned Today #3

Currently Reading: [The Paleo Solution](#) by Robb Wolf

I know. I know. I was supposed to be reading *The China Study* right now. Sorry, I just couldn't bring myself to do it. Not that I'm avoiding it at all. I honestly just have better things to do and more great books to read with the limited time I've got. I'll get to it one of these days.

Instead, I pulled Robb Wolf's bestseller *The Paleo Solution* off the shelf. Great choice. This book rocks. Full of great info and pretty darn funny, too! Robb's got jokes.

Today, I'm getting my learn on about the many hormones involved in hunger and satiety. A lot of people I consult with just can't stop eating. They're perpetually hungry. Nothing satisfies them, especially the high-carb, low-fat diet they've been scared into consuming. Not so coincidentally, these same folks can't recall the last time they got a restful night's sleep. They either take hours to fall asleep or they wake up every 2 or 3 hours. Sometimes both. That's gotta suck.

Of course, my job is to investigate the reason *why* they can't catch the Zs they need. Usually, it's an upside-down **cortisol rhythm**. Cortisol (our awakening "let's get after it" hormone) is supposed to be high in the morning and lowest at night. As cortisol falls throughout the day, our restorative hormone melatonin rises. For many reasons (usually it's an infection somewhere), the cortisol stays elevated at bedtime, thus suppressing melatonin and giving them that second wind. Tired all day but can't sleep at night. Again, it sucks.

In his book, Robb drops some truth bombs about the link between poor sleep and overeating. The two go hand-in-hand due to the influence our sleeping habits have on a hormone called **ghrelin**. Ghrelin is produced by the cells that line our stomachs, the epsilon cells on our pancreases (or is it panerei?), and the hypothalamic arcuate nucleus (thanks for the big words, Robb!) within our brains. This hormone does three things. It makes us hungry. Makes us want to eat more food. And it makes us fatter. Exactly what you were looking for!

By now, you've probably figured out that keeping your ghrelin down would be a pretty decent idea. But if you're staying up late to catch the new Conan show, you best be sure that you're getting your ghrelin on! And if you're one of those "I'll sleep when I'm dead" peeps, you should probably know that The Centers for Disease Control recently classified your all-nighters as a carcinogen. Lack of sleep will *make you dead*, my friend. I hope it was worth it!

If you've been wondering why your gut feels like a bottomless pit, you may have the answer you've been looking for. You're a walking, talking ghrelin factory who can't stop yawning! And that's not all. You're a diabetic now, too. According to Robb (on page 128), "just one night of missed or inadequate sleep is sufficient to make you as insulin resistant as a Type 2 diabetic". Ouch.

The solution? Turn off the TV, log out of Facebook, and go to bed. If this doesn't work so well for you, give me a call and I'll help you figure it out. For a lot of the people I work with, restless nights are coming right out of their guts. Can't sleep. Can't stop eating. Can't lose weight. Can't poop. If I had a nickel...