- Hormones / Sleep

NIGHT SHIFT

Why balancing your hormones is the first step to better sleep

Take5 · 8 May 2025 · 12

Getting a good night's sleep is a bit like playing in an orchestra. There are different components, and all the instruments have to work in perfect harmony for it to be good. One outoftune violin and the music falls apart. Our hormones are the instruments and sleep is the music.



According to sleep expert, endocrinology specialist and head medical partner at BIOV8, Professor Lee Kennedy, all it takes is for one hormone to be offbalance and your whole sleep-wake cycle is out of whack.

HORMONAL HARMONY

"Hormones play a crucial role in regulating our sleep-wake cycle, with melatonin and cortisol working together to keep our body clock in sync," explains Professor Kennedy.

"Melatonin, often called the 'sleep hormone', rises in the evening to help signal to our body that it's time to wind down, while cortisol, our primary stress hormone, peaks in the morn-

ing to promote wakefulness and alertness.

“A healthy balance of both cortisol and melatonin is essential, as deregulated levels can lead to grogginess in the morning or restlessness at night.”

CORTISOL DETOX

Cortisol is another hormone that plays a vital role in the sleep-wake cycle. It’s the body’s primary stress hormone, and it helps to regulate energy, metabolism and sleep. But too much cortisol can suppress the body’s production of melatonin, making it harder to sleep.

“Ideally, cortisol will peak in the morning to help wake us up and gradually decline throughout the day, allowing melatonin to take over at night,” explains Professor Kennedy.

“However, when cortisol remains high in the evening – due to stress, caffeine, or an irregular routine – it keeps the body in a state of alertness, making it difficult to fall or stay asleep.”

Persistently high cortisol levels can lead to more serious health problems, such as an increased risk of anxiety and depression.

“Poor sleep caused by chronic stress can also disrupt other hormonal balances, weaken the immune system, and even contribute to metabolic issues like weight gain or insulin resistance,” he adds.

If you regularly struggle

to sleep, Professor Kennedy says it’s important to break the cycle. He suggests managing stress levels with relaxation techniques and maintaining consistent sleep habits to restore cortisol levels to normal.

HAVE A GOOD NIGHT

When it comes to getting a good night’s sleep, Professor Kennedy says “it’s quality over quantity.”

He adds that once you know how to manage your hormone health, “you’ll be able to not only manage your sleep but get quality rest, which will improve your quality of life.”

“A short amount of good quality sleep will always be more beneficial than a full night’s worth of poor quality sleep,” he says.