

EXERCISE

# 8760 Hours: Awake? Asleep?



Time: Ongoing



Setup and materials: Sleep log (template)



Good For: Individuals, families

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## Framing:

*You have 8760 hours in a year, but those aren't all available for activity. Humans have to sleep. If you sleep eight hours, you have 5840 waking hours a year. So why not just skip all this sleep? You can't.*

*Any kind of sleep is restorative. Certain people sleep slightly more or less, but seven to eight hours is optimal. People in creative professions are often long sleepers; they sleep or nap for ten or more hours a day. That behavior fits with what science tells us about REM sleep and creativity.*

*If you suspect you would get more out of life by sleeping less than seven hours, look into the research. A good source is Why We Sleep by Matthew Walker. You'll learn about the benefits of quieting both mind and body. You give your brain time to file short-term memory from the day, process, and problem solve. All that goes on while your body goes through its own specific timed regimen for clearing and cleansing itself.*

| Hours of sleep/night | waking hours a year | waking hours/quarter | waking hours/week |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 6                    | 6570                | 1642.5               | 126.3             |
| 8                    | 5840                | 1460                 | 112.3             |
| 10                   | 5110                | 1277.5               | 98.3              |

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## Steps:

1. Make a three-month commitment to pay attention to improving the quality of your sleep. Choose a day to begin your sleep research. The first of a month makes your start date memorable. One month of attending to sleep, then two, then three.
2. Don't feel that you have to fill out this entire chart every day. That level of rigor could drive even the most persistent chart-filler-outer to abandon the effort. I fill in the three columns on the back page intermittently, and it's always interesting, but

then I quit doing it for stretches of time. I track the total almost every day. I like watching the whole space fill in, the numbers make a visual texture of sleep.

3. It's useful to turn off media half an hour to an hour before sleeping. I call that a shift to screenless. You may have other bedtime rituals that prepare you for rich deep sleep. Add anything you would like to your own chart. Bedtime and wake time are when I get in and out of bed. If you read, write, watch movies in bed, consider a one month test of using your bed just to sleep.
4. Researchers describe sleep opportunity as distinct from the different levels of sleep. I track sleep opportunity. I set the phone timer on stopwatch and start it when I get into bed. Then I stop it and write down the hours when I get up. Not when I wake up, rather when I get out of bed. I sometimes give a rating to the overall sleep quality, from 1=restless to 5=long and deep.
5. Make any notes you want to about your sleep or about changes you notice in your state of mind when you're awake.

TEMPLATE

# 8760 Hours: Awake? Asleep?

Total sleep opportunity hours

| MONTH 1: | MONTH 2: | MONTH 3: |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1        | 1        | 1        |
| 2        | 2        | 2        |
| 3        | 3        | 3        |
| 4        | 4        | 4        |
| 5        | 5        | 5        |
| 6        | 6        | 6        |
| 7        | 7        | 7        |
| 8        | 8        | 8        |
| 9        | 9        | 9        |
| 10       | 10       | 10       |
| 11       | 11       | 11       |
| 12       | 12       | 12       |
| 13       | 13       | 13       |
| 14       | 14       | 14       |
| 15       | 15       | 15       |
| 16       | 16       | 16       |
| 17       | 17       | 17       |
| 18       | 18       | 18       |
| 19       | 19       | 19       |
| 20       | 20       | 20       |
| 21       | 21       | 21       |
| 22       | 22       | 22       |
| 23       | 23       | 23       |
| 24       | 24       | 24       |
| 25       | 25       | 25       |
| 26       | 26       | 26       |
| 27       | 27       | 27       |
| 28       | 28       | 28       |
| 29       | 29       | 29       |
| 30       | 30       | 30       |
| 31       | 31       | 31       |
| TOTAL:   | TOTAL:   | TOTAL:   |

MONTH 1:

| screenless time | bed time | wake time | sleep quality 1-5 | notes |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|-------------------|-------|
| 1               |          |           |                   |       |
| 2               |          |           |                   |       |
| 3               |          |           |                   |       |
| 4               |          |           |                   |       |
| 5               |          |           |                   |       |
| 6               |          |           |                   |       |
| 7               |          |           |                   |       |
| 8               |          |           |                   |       |
| 9               |          |           |                   |       |
| 10              |          |           |                   |       |
| 11              |          |           |                   |       |
| 12              |          |           |                   |       |
| 13              |          |           |                   |       |
| 14              |          |           |                   |       |
| 15              |          |           |                   |       |
| 16              |          |           |                   |       |
| 17              |          |           |                   |       |
| 18              |          |           |                   |       |
| 19              |          |           |                   |       |
| 20              |          |           |                   |       |
| 21              |          |           |                   |       |
| 22              |          |           |                   |       |
| 23              |          |           |                   |       |
| 24              |          |           |                   |       |
| 25              |          |           |                   |       |
| 26              |          |           |                   |       |
| 27              |          |           |                   |       |
| 28              |          |           |                   |       |
| 29              |          |           |                   |       |
| 30              |          |           |                   |       |
| 31              |          |           |                   |       |
| TOTAL:          |          |           |                   |       |

MONTH 2:

| screenless time | bed time | wake time | sleep quality 1-5 | notes |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|-------------------|-------|
| 1               |          |           |                   |       |
| 2               |          |           |                   |       |
| 3               |          |           |                   |       |
| 4               |          |           |                   |       |
| 5               |          |           |                   |       |
| 6               |          |           |                   |       |
| 7               |          |           |                   |       |
| 8               |          |           |                   |       |
| 9               |          |           |                   |       |
| 10              |          |           |                   |       |
| 11              |          |           |                   |       |
| 12              |          |           |                   |       |
| 13              |          |           |                   |       |
| 14              |          |           |                   |       |
| 15              |          |           |                   |       |
| 16              |          |           |                   |       |
| 17              |          |           |                   |       |
| 18              |          |           |                   |       |
| 19              |          |           |                   |       |
| 20              |          |           |                   |       |
| 21              |          |           |                   |       |
| 22              |          |           |                   |       |
| 23              |          |           |                   |       |
| 24              |          |           |                   |       |
| 25              |          |           |                   |       |
| 26              |          |           |                   |       |
| 27              |          |           |                   |       |
| 28              |          |           |                   |       |
| 29              |          |           |                   |       |
| 30              |          |           |                   |       |
| 31              |          |           |                   |       |
| TOTAL:          |          |           |                   |       |

MONTH 3:

| screenless time | bed time | wake time | sleep quality 1-5 | notes |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|-------------------|-------|
| 1               |          |           |                   |       |
| 2               |          |           |                   |       |
| 3               |          |           |                   |       |
| 4               |          |           |                   |       |
| 5               |          |           |                   |       |
| 6               |          |           |                   |       |
| 7               |          |           |                   |       |
| 8               |          |           |                   |       |
| 9               |          |           |                   |       |
| 10              |          |           |                   |       |
| 11              |          |           |                   |       |
| 12              |          |           |                   |       |
| 13              |          |           |                   |       |
| 14              |          |           |                   |       |
| 15              |          |           |                   |       |
| 16              |          |           |                   |       |
| 17              |          |           |                   |       |
| 18              |          |           |                   |       |
| 19              |          |           |                   |       |
| 20              |          |           |                   |       |
| 21              |          |           |                   |       |
| 22              |          |           |                   |       |
| 23              |          |           |                   |       |
| 24              |          |           |                   |       |
| 25              |          |           |                   |       |
| 26              |          |           |                   |       |
| 27              |          |           |                   |       |
| 28              |          |           |                   |       |
| 29              |          |           |                   |       |
| 30              |          |           |                   |       |
| 31              |          |           |                   |       |
| TOTAL:          |          |           |                   |       |