

The Guide to Better Sleep Naturally

Second Edition



Written by Anne-Marie Foster, BS, RRT
for the Sleep & Breathing Management Center

Foreword

Sleep is a wave and you are a surfer.

Every night your goal
is to catch the perfect wave
and enjoy a nice long ride
straight through till morning.

For most people, that perfect wave rolls in sometime between 10 and 11 pm every night. With that in mind, you the surfer, must be ready to catch that wave and must be in tune with your body to recognize that it is coming. If you miss that perfect wave, another wave will be around in an hour or so, but it won't be as well-formed and won't give you as smooth and as long a ride. The perfect wave will have you asleep in 5 minutes and bring you a good 7 to 8 hours of solid sleep, with nearly half of it in the important sleep stages of Delta and REM. It will bring you to shore feeling refreshed and ready for your day.

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for The Sleep & Breathing Management Center

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Box 5 Old Mystic, CT 06372

www.areyou-sleeping.com

www.sleepynomore.com

e-mail: sleepynomore@areyou-sleeping.com

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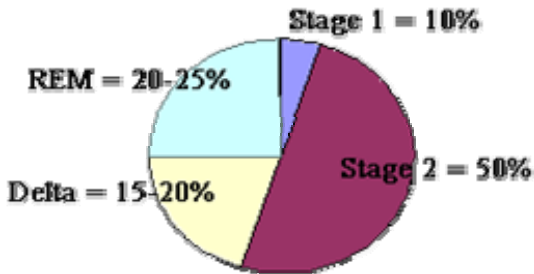
INTRODUCTION

Sleep Cycle and Sleep Stages

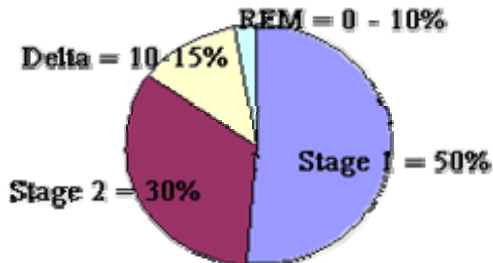
A normal sleep cycle is about 90 minutes long and is made up of five stages:

- stage 1 = drowsiness with light dreams
- stage 2 = light sleep
- stages 3 & 4 = Delta or deep sleep
- stage 5 = REM or deep dream sleep

In normal sleep:



In abnormal sleep:



Sleep Cycle and Sleep Stages(continued)

The 90 minute sleep cycle usually repeats itself 4-6 times a night, but not always in a linear fashion. In normal sleep, you may reach your first REM stage 60 to 90 minutes after you fall asleep, having gone from stages 1 to 2 to Delta to REM. This Delta stage may last 10 to 15 minutes & this REM stage may be very short. In your next cycle, you may skip stage 1 entirely and go straight to stage 2, then to a slightly longer Delta stage, a short REM stage, etc. In normal sleep, Deltas are longer during the first third or half of the night and REMs are longer during the last half of the night, particularly between 3 am and 6 am.

Sleep is classified as abnormal if there is inadequate time spent in the deep sleep stages of Delta and REM. This lack of deep sleep is why people feel tired. Sleeping for 8 hours does not guarantee you will feel rested if you have not spent enough of those 8 hours in Delta & REM sleep. Although it is unclear why we require enough REM sleep, it is clear why Delta sleep is so important. During Delta sleep, the body restores muscle, tissue, bone & blood cells that have been damaged, destroyed or died of old age and releases and/or produces hormones that regulate many of the vital functions of the body. If this repair, replacement, restoration & release does not take place, it weakens the immune system, and as a result, over time, a lack of deep sleep leaves you more prone to getting sick.

In abnormal sleep, you may never get into REM sleep at all. If you do, you will dream, but may not remember them. If you happen to wake up during REM, you may remember your dream, but unless you focus on it or write it down, by morning, the memory of the dream will most likely have faded.

In sleep disrupted by a sleep disorder, there may be two to three cycles before Delta and/or REM sleep is reached. The more severe the daytime sleepiness, the more likely it is that REM is never reached. Certain medications are known to cause a delayed onset of Delta or REM sleep or even total REM suppression. As mentioned previously, if Delta and REM sleep are not achieved, sleep is pretty much a waste of time.

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