

Being a night owl could shorten your life

Those who follow the adage “early to bed, early to rise” live a longer life, according to a joint study.

Night owls (who like to stay up late) have a 10 percent greater risk of dying than morning people, according to a study from Northwestern University and the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom.

The study looked at data from nearly half a million participants and found that self-described evening people had higher rates of diabetes, psychological disorders, and neurological disorders.

“Night owls trying to live in a morning lark world may have health consequences for their bodies,” noted Kristen Knutson, an author of the study.

Staying up late may make it tougher to get enough exercise and sleep, she noted. Psychological stress and alcohol or drug use could also play a role in the shorter life span for night owls.

Whether a person is a night owl or lark will depend on both biological and environmental factors. People whose internal biological clock is constantly fighting their work schedule might benefit from moving to a night shift or having a flexible schedule that doesn't involve being in the office at 8 a.m.



Night owls can also try to adopt more lark-like behaviors. To make the shift, Knutson suggests:

- Stick to a regular bedtime schedule – don't let bedtime get later and later.
- Make sure you are exposed to light early in the morning, but not at night.
- Strive to accomplish tasks earlier in the day.



Additional Resources



Geographic variation in short sleep duration

These maps from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show how much sleep people report in various areas of the country.

https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/data_statistics.html

What is drowsy driving?

This infographic from the CDC talks about the dangers of drowsy driving and provides tips for preventing it.

<https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/pdf/publicationsmediaproducts/drowsy-driving-infographic.pdf>