Better to hit the gym tired than not at all?

February 3, 2020 | 82 upvotes | by [iHeartCapitalism](#)

I have a very erratic sleeping schedule since I'm a self-employed programmer, meaning often I have to work on a project until 2, 6, or even 10 in the morning.

I currently live in a little chicken village so the gym here closes early, meaning the only chance I have to go on certain days is at 10 in the morning, while pretty tired.

I still get an Ok workout, and it feels better than not going at all though.

Any thoughts?

And any tips for getting the most out of a tired workout?

Archived from [theredarchive.com](#)

Comments

NabroleonBonaparte • 86 points • 3 February, 2020 01:53 AM

Yeah it's better to workout than not to workout, but you're fucking yourself up.

You need to get a minimum of 7hrs of deep consistent sleep to heal your body.

Lifting not only taxes your muscles but also your central nervous system (CNS). CNS Fatigue can lead to things like lack of concentration, mood swings (loss of frame), and lack of energy.

I don't know all the details of your life, so I can't really recommend what is possible for you, but recognize that this isn't a long-term strategy and you WILL eventually collapse from this.

> [deleted] • 8 points • 3 February, 2020 01:55 AM
>
> Collapse mentally, or collapse physically and die?
>
> > NabroleonBonaparte • 26 points • 3 February, 2020 02:01 AM
> >
> > You won't die, but it'll be a gradual decrease in the quality of your life.
> >
> > Lack of focus means your sleep will become more inconsistent. Then eventually you'll spend less and less time at the gym until eventually you feel so shitty that you'll quit.
> >
> > Your body will be so focused on healing yourself that you'll only be able to do the bare minimum activities (work, eat, and sleep).
> >
> > I'd recommend getting home weights if possible so you can get an adequate sleep schedule, if it's not possible to find a gym with a better schedule.
> >
> > > [deleted] • 13 points • 3 February, 2020 02:03 AM
> > >
> > > Makes perfect sense.
> > >
> > > I know how sleep deprivation over a long term and fatigue can absolutely destroy your mental state, so it seems pointless to try and better myself by going to the gym only to fuck it all up with a bad schedule.
> > >
> > > Thanks for the advice, appreciate it.
> > >
> > > > DrizzlyShrimp36 • 3 points • 3 February, 2020 05:18 AM
> > > >
> > > > If you're looking for quality home work outs, get a TRX. You can have a brutal work out in the confort of your living room.
> >
> > DF-RP • 1 point • 5 February, 2020 01:57 AM
> >
> > IIRC there are studies on people doing e.g. shift work or very high working hours, which forced them to sleep less hours on average. Findings included lower average lifespan. But don't take my word on it, look around for the actual studies.
> >
> > As someone who regularly works 9am-2am, and tackles the same problem, I would heavily recommend prioritizing sleep over workout where possible. Sucks to be able to hit gym only 3-4 times a week, but it is what it is.

FereallyRed • 150 points • 3 February, 2020 12:22 AM

Go. The simple discipline exercise is worth more than a subpar workout, and a subpar workout is better than no workout.

> [deleted] • 35 points • 3 February, 2020 02:38 AM
>
> 1 hour is better than 10 minutes but 10 minutes is better than sitting on your ass.

bush2874 • 24 points • 3 February, 2020 03:28 AM

Yes. As Jocko says, even if you are just going to be going through the motions, go through the motions. It build the habit and helps build discipline. Discipline equals freedom.

> PhaedrusHunt • 14 points • 3 February, 2020 04:40 AM
>
> Jocko is a physical freak and even so he's not exactly aging like wine. He'd be better off if he slept more.
>
> When he fought Mike Tyson, Holyfield was sleeping 10 hours a day.
>
> Be more effective with your time, then sleep in with a clean conscience

> > bush2874 • 7 points • 3 February, 2020 06:02 AM
> >
> > Holyfield was a professional athlete who's career depended of his physical well being.
> >
> > Normal people working out don't need 10 hours of sleep. It's important to have the discipline to get your 6-8 hour of sleep but there are 24 hours in a day.
> >
> > Even if you worked 14hr days, sleep 8, there are 2hrs left over. There is no excuse to not being able to exercise 1hr a day or even just 4 days a week, just super intense workouts like what Dorian Yates did.
> >
> > Sounds like he probably just need to start scheduling his time better. Discipline equals freedom.

> > > PhaedrusHunt • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 03:06 PM
> > >
> > > I agree with you. My only point is that if you are actually in a situation where you have to choose between sleep and working out, sleep is probably the healthier choice.
> > >
> > > I'm self-employed and there have been times where scheduling a workout was just not possible.
> > >
> > > ultimately you need to change your schedule so that it is possible but in the meantime get your rest

> > > > bush2874 • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 11:37 PM
> > > >
> > > > Agreed. Personally, I'm still pretty young and prioritize the gym a lot so I would probably sacrifice sleep now. But the older you get the more a lack of sleep affects you.

Dizbobble • 27 points • 3 February, 2020 02:44 AM

The days where the last thing you want to do is go to the gym are the most important days to go. Anyone can go when it's easy, if you want to reach your goals you need to be consistent at all costs

RoteTablette • 16 points • 3 February, 2020 04:53 AM

Please read „Miracle morning for millionaires". I used to be that guy. Coding until 2am. Calling myself a „night person". You are fooling yourself. Change your schedule. Get up early and pay yourself first which means workout, meditation, reading and writing, setting goals, financial planning etc. Do all of that before you start working for others.

[deleted] • 6 points • 3 February, 2020 04:54 AM

Thank you for the recommendation. I really do want to change this sleeping schedule I just need so guidance. I'll read the book you recommended

> RoteTablette • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 06:19 AM
>
> Yes, then the book is for you. It starts with practical advice how to get started and then goes deeper into what to do with the new freedom. I am sure you'll enjoy it.
>
> It worked for me (just got back from my 6am workout).

cydestiny • 7 points • 3 February, 2020 02:15 AM

Why not tune your schedule since you're self employed?

You're going to burn out one day with that kind of lifestyle.

10 bucks that your diet is screwed up too.

You're not going to get anything working out in this state.

> [deleted] • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 02:16 AM
>
> I'm a night person, so it could work having a schedule where I wake up at 2-4 in the afternoon. The problem is that it goes to hell the days I need to be awake at 8.
>
> And you're right, my diet is fucked. Got some non-serious complications in my digestive system so now I'm forced to change it.
>
> > cydestiny • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 02:24 AM
> >
> > You know your problems but is too comfortable in the habits that you rationalize not to change it, a.k.a. hamstering.
> >
> > Try to step out and put yourself in the most uncomfortable position you can be then you'll realized that all of what you had claimed are excuses.
> >
> > I used to be a night owl, until I forced myself into a job where I need to get up at 6. It was hell but it gets better each day.
> >
> > celincelin • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 05:50 AM
> >
> > > I'm a night person
> >
> > This is physiologically impossible.
> >
> > > volvostupidshit • 4 points • 3 February, 2020 07:31 AM
> > >
> > > He means he has no discipline to sleep on time.
> > >
> > > > [deleted] • 4 points • 3 February, 2020 08:24 AM
> > > >
> > > > Pretty much it. I'm not naturally very disciplined.
> > > >
> > > > I'm very disciplined when it comes to my work, and now the goal is to be disciplined in going to the gym. Afterwards I'll tackle the schedule beast.
> > > >
> > > > > cydestiny • 3 points • 3 February, 2020 02:26 PM
> > > > >
> > > > > Good plan. I would fix the schedule before anything else. But hey, good luck!

PhaedrusHunt • 5 points • 3 February, 2020 04:30 AM

If your rest and diet aren't on point, get them that way.

As you get older you'll see your body breaks down and injuries build if you're overworked and under rested.

You can get away with it when you're young but it's a bad idea.

Work a home routine in with calisthenics and kettle bells when your schedule is weird.

[deleted] • 6 points • 3 February, 2020 06:12 AM

IMO lifting is pointless without sleep. You won't get shit for gains, and you'll feel like death 24/7. I'd honestly invest in a home gym or something, anything where you can get your sleep and your lifts without compromise.

> folded1000time • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 02:15 PM*
>
> deleted
>
> > [deleted] • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 04:47 PM
> >
> > I just don't think it's good for you is all, I try to avoid it but I also have the luxury of doing so.
> >
> > > folded1000time • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 07:41 PM*
> > >
> > > deleted
> > >
> > > > [deleted] • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 07:48 PM
> > > >
> > > > Facts, my original post is more about OP specifically who is getting like 3/4 hours tops. That shit is unhealthy.

devontyb • 5 points • 3 February, 2020 12:24 AM

I think you answered your own question. It's better to lift tired than not at all. I go to the gym at 4:35am on the dot with a crazy sleep schedule as well. I'm never not tired.

Rispy_Girl • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 01:57 AM

Have you thought about investing in some weights, so you can workout and get sleep?

> [deleted] • 6 points • 3 February, 2020 01:57 AM
>
> I do have some weights, but weights alone don't compare to an entire gym,. Also, while at the gym it's easier to keep pushing for that 45-60 minutes whereas at home it's too easy to just drop the weights and stop.
>
> > Rispy_Girl • 3 points • 3 February, 2020 02:00 AM
> >
> > Yeah, the discipline at home is definitely harder, but it may be worth going to the gym a few days and working out at home a few days, so you get sleep.

BodomDeth • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 02:17 AM

start by going easy and stretch. your body will demand more once your system boots up.

also fix your sleeping schedule lol

[deleted] • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 02:31 AM*

Being a developer is a job that will really fuck your schedule up and sap your energy. You'll need to fix issues at weird morning hours, if you're in crunch time you may be working 50 hour weeks or so, you may need to work

on the weekend sometimes (a good company will certainly pay you well and give you time off for all this), etc. This applies to every company. Stuff will break at weird ass times and somebody has to fix it asap. As a dev, this is you.

So, just get as much sleep as possible bro. And I would suggest one of those standing/adjustable height desks for your house so you don't kill yourself by sitting all day, they're great. You could also get a treadmill for when the gym is closed. Just walk or jog in place while you watch Youtube or something. I do it and it's great.

And for your job...

Try caffeinated gum!

Edit: and if you're lifting tired, machines only. Smith press is your friend.

INNASKILLZ2K18 • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 04:20 AM

Go. Always go. Always instill the habit, persistence and routine.

Even if your sleep and recover is sub-optimal, you never EVER use it to completely bottom out and stop.

Keep what you're doing, but improve upon it. Without proper sleep and recovery your training will be sub-optimal.

Do whatever it takes to get adequate rest, and eat properly. That's at least half the game.

fretty555 • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 04:21 AM

Seriously you can get pretty awesome work outs in a room at home with enough empty space. Look up abnormal beings on youtube he has sick workouts. you really dont even need to go to the gym man. You can do well with 30 minutes of exercise at home in the day. but yeah get good nutrition and sleep. stretching is good too

ohyesimthatguy • 2 points • 3 February, 2020 04:29 AM

Focus on fixing your sleep schedule first. That's the most important thing.

dietstarts_tmrw • 7 points • 3 February, 2020 12:31 AM

no i would rather rest and hit the gym when i have full energy. you get stronger while recovering, not while lifting

FinancialThanks1 • 4 points • 3 February, 2020 12:34 AM

Yes it's better to go tired than not at all. Take caffeine

peacemakerzzz • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 02:18 AM

Better to hit the gym tired, yes. Because you are training consistently, you will develop more endurance and even if you have an erratic work schedule you will develop fitness over time. And once you see results you will become motivated more than ever.

PIGamer86 • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 02:53 AM

Just be safe. Don't get lazy with your posture and positioning.

flyinghorse1 • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 03:27 AM

You should go and commit to a certain number of days per week.

You all ready know this, but get your sleep hygiene in order.

[deleted] • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 03:28 AM

Agree with you about getting sleep in order. Going through the day tired is really taking a toll on me.

Greaterbird • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 03:55 AM

Yeah. Every time I go to the gym on a day I don't feel like working out, I feel like working out once I'm in the locker room.

PijaPaj • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 05:19 AM

Even if it's a bad or short day at the gym you still went. Consistency

sosman10 • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 05:24 AM

Workout at home. Buy a pull up bar that can attach to your door frame and workout at home and do the following.

Pushups(chest,shoulders, triceps). Pull-ups/chin-ups (back,biceps). Body weight squats. Crunches/sit-ups. Burpees. Planks.

You can workout at home on your schedule. You might not get as big as using free weights but you will damn sure be in shape.

Workouts getting too easy? Want to pack on more muscle? Fill up a book bag with stuff, wear the bag and strap it tight.

If dudes locked up in a jail cell can do it then you can.

alphakari • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 07:29 AM

My backup workout for when I'm abusing logistical truths to make bitchmade decisions is running bc I hate running, and you can do it literally whenever (winter too, you pussy) at whatever intensity you want, so the only excuse is if you've got arthritis or some shit.

Even then, maybe stop being a bitch and cut off your useless appendages. Parapalegics are running nowadays.

Greek-God-Brody • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 07:55 AM*

You will not gain muscle with little sleep, that's a guarantee.

When I was bulking, I did not gain much muscle on solid 8hrs / night and sufficient caloric intake. I just maintained my weight. Upped my sleep to 8:30 - 9hrs/night, immediately started gaining weight.

If you're not pushing yourself to have the best possible physique, that's another story.

What you want in periods with little sleep is to maintain the muscle mass that you have.

[deleted] • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 07:56 AM

I do sleep, some 8-9 hours a day, that's not the problem.

The problem is the time I can go to the gym is often when i've been awake the whole night.

[deleted] • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 08:20 AM

I definitely think you should go even if you're tired but DO NOT try to hit PRs or try some new bullshit DL or Squat variation when your tired. This is a sure fire way to fuck your shit up.

professor_mcamateur • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 09:15 AM

chicken village

what

> [deleted] 3 February, 2020 09:16 AM
>
> [deleted]

>> professor_mcamateur • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 09:50 AM
>>
>> care to elaborate further?

>>> [deleted] 3 February, 2020 09:57 AM
>>>
>>> [deleted]

>>>> professor_mcamateur • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 09:58 AM
>>>>
>>>> chickenfucker

>>>>> [deleted] 3 February, 2020 10:00 AM
>>>>>
>>>>> [deleted]

>>>>>> professor_mcamateur • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 10:15 AM
>>>>>>
>>>>>> lol k

redpillbanana • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 10:06 AM

If you're lifting heavy, a sleep-deprived workout can lead to injury.

Make sure you're well-rested, but also know the difference between "tired" and "don't really feel like it".

MrNutty • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 11:07 AM

At that point you're training self discipline rather than optimal training which is also a win in my book.

JRSBOOM13 • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 12:15 PM

I've wound up having great workouts on the days I don't want to go.

Merica911 • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 01:27 PM

First off, no job in the world is worth to Compromise your health. Always find time to exercise even if it's carving through your work

PumConqueror • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 03:13 PM

Listen, ideally you would get 8 hours of sleep/day. But life rarely gives us the best circumstances to deal with. Make the most of the hand you're dealt.

You can still make great gains while getting sub-optimal sleep for extended periods of time. I've done it and so have many other people. The body is tough and will adapt.

ThrowawayYAYAY2002 • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 11:31 PM

Use it to work on your weak points/lagging parts if you are *really* lacking energy.

Not every gym has to consist of you being peeled off of the floor.

[deleted] 3 February, 2020 01:00 AM

[removed]

[deleted] • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 01:01 AM

Is this something that happens once and boom your heart and arteries are fucked, or is it something that builds up over time?

> [deleted] • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 01:39 AM
>
> Just gauage how exhausted you really are man
>
> xxx69harambe69xxx • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 03:22 AM
>
> sorry to say, aneurysms are for life, likewise with heart damage
>
> heart replacement is a possibility that will likely never be worth it in our lifetimes

__LocalGhost__ • 1 point • 3 February, 2020 05:42 AM

Hit the fucking gym, no excuses. Even if you will do one rep or one set, give your best. Anything is better than nothing