

In A Nutshell
February 2020
Counting Sheep

Most people occasionally experience sleep problems, but people with MS frequently struggle to get enough quality sleep. Why? Medication side effects and MS symptoms can lead to insomnia, fragmented nighttime rest, or daytime sleepiness. Additionally, an active course of MS can trigger circadian disruption.

Uninterrupted sleep provides our brains with ample time to heal. If we aren't sleeping deeply or long enough, we minimize our chances of overcoming functional, MS-related problems that occur during a relapse or that are part of disease progression.

Plasticity, or neuroplasticity, is the brain's ability to change and adapt to new conditions.

Functional plasticity describes the ease with which the CNS reroutes signals away from damaged areas to complete certain tasks.

Structural plasticity describes the brain's changes in response to new stimuli.

Myelin plasticity refers to the ability of the CNS to generate new oligodendrocytes and maintain the myelin coating of your nerves. (Remember, oligodendrocytes are the brain cells responsible for producing myelin)

Researchers Luisa de Vivo and Michele Bellesi found that myelin maintenance and regeneration benefit the most from the undisturbed process of sleep.

The brain struggles to generate and maintain healthy myelin in cases of untreated sleep disorders or sleep deprivation. So what do we do? We want the brain to enter deeper stages of sleep during periods of consolidated rest, providing the central nervous system the chance for myelin maintenance and remyelination.

Just For Fun

So, we need to get adequate and quality sleep. The guideline is 7 hours of uninterrupted rest. A sleep study or proactive behavioral changes to improve sleep habits may be worthwhile.

I had a sleep study done and have been using a CPAP machine for many years. I also have a Fitbit which tracks my sleep. It monitors sleep time, restless time and awake time during the night. I am trying to maintain a goal of at least 7 hours of quality sleep each night.

Food for thought.

https://multiplesclerosisnewstoday.com/news-posts/need-know-sleep-myelin-plasticity-sleep-disorders?utm_source=Multiple+Sclerosis&utm_campaign=75ec20dc7c-RSS_US_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b5fb7a3dae-75ec20dc7c-71589013