Benjamin Franklin famously wrote, “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise,” in *Poor Richard's Almanack* in 1735. Mr. Franklin, however, didn’t exactly have the same shut-eye stumbling blocks we face today.

SOT
Dr. Patrick Whitten, OSF HealthCare Sleep Specialist
“Since the development of the light bulb, we’ve lost about an hour to an hour and a half of sleep. So the early 1900’s, people would get maybe 8 ½ to 9 hours of sleep at night. Now we are averaging 7, 7 ½. Now with social media, people with cell phones, tablets, these lights in bed, trying to check that last email or check that last post on Facebook, we’re losing sleep.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control, one in three Americans is not getting enough sleep. Dr. Whitten says chronic sleep deprivation is a real problem, because people generally overextend themselves during the day. This translates into lack of sleep at night.

SOT
Dr. Patrick Whitten, OSF HealthCare Sleep Specialist
“Chronic sleep deprivation, chronic tiredness can lead to loss of productivity at work, when then bosses aren’t happy, mood changes, irritability, you’re not getting along with your family, or your friends or colleagues at work, so it just has a chain reaction of multiple events.”

A new study, published in the journal Sleep Science and Practice, has also made the correlation between quality sleep and perceived quality of life. Study subjects were given surveys on their purpose in life and their sleep. Those who claimed purpose in life also claimed to get more quality sleep.

Dr. Whitten says what happens in your life during the day can definitely impact a good night’s sleep.

SOT
Dr. Patrick Whitten, OSF HealthCare Sleep Specialist
“People that generally have good things going on in their life, work is going okay, family life is going okay, they tend to sleep well. They don’t report sleep problems per say. Those that have issues going on during the day, poor work performance, poor relationships with their colleagues or family members or spouses, they’re going to have disrupted sleep.”

If you are tossing and turning at night, Dr. Whitten says there are certain sleep hygiene steps to follow to help promote a good night’s sleep. He recommends going to bed at the same bedtime each night and getting up at the same rise-time each day. Also, limit caffeine and turn off the electronics at night.

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Dr. Patrick Whitten, OSF HealthCare Sleep Specialist
“…For people who don’t have sleep problems at night, we tend not to care what they do, as long as they are sleeping okay and they’re functional during the day. But once you do develop a sleep problem, you want to avoid those light stimulus – the TV, the music, the radio, things like that. The cell phones. Those can tend to disrupt sleep.”

And while most of us have had the occasional restless night, there is a point where professional help may be necessary.

SOT
Dr. Patrick Whitten, OSF HealthCare Sleep Specialist
"Anything that lasts greater than six months is probably a problem that should be checked with a sleep specialist to figure out what is actually going on."

Your physician can refer you for a sleep study or sleep medicine consultation. You can find more information about the OSF HealthCare Sleep Center here, or by calling (309) 661-2368.