

## **Study This: Why Catching a Few Zzzzs Is Better Than Pulling an All-Nighter**

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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'Tis the season for final exams and end-of-semester tests and projects before the holiday break. For some students that means extra study time trying to catch up on classwork or cramming for a final. That might include pulling an all-nighter – but is that really a good idea when it comes to learning?

Studies show that more than 65% of teenagers don't get the recommended 8 to 10 hours of sleep a night. For college students, at least 25% don't get at least eight hours of sleep and 25% of them report that sleep deprivation affects their academic performance.

Sleep deprivation is a common problem among high school and college students. But pulling an all-nighter is not the answer. Experts say sleeping some is better than not sleeping at all.

### **SOT DR. SARAH ZALLEK, NEUROLOGIST - OSF HEALTHCARE ILLINOIS NEUROLOGICAL INSTITUTE**

(Not sleeping makes it harder to perform on the test, and you might not feel that right away because momentarily we can perform just as well if we're super sleep deprived in some conditions than if we had plenty of sleep. So if you feel like 'I've got this' on the first question on your math test, but what happens is after several minutes on the test you start to decline in your performance. The test goes more slowly, you attempt fewer questions on the test in the time allotted so it takes longer and you might run out of time and the performance of the answers is less accurate, so you're less good at the test and you're less likely to finish the test if you're sleep deprived :43)

**V/O:** Dr. Sarah Zallek is a neurologist who specializes in sleep disorders. She says it's the short term memory that goes first with a lack of sleep – exactly what a student has been trying to cram in by studying all night. Additionally, you're less likely to have the brain processes that allow you to function with new information like planning, processing, and organizing. Dr. Zallek says you need good sleep habits throughout the semester to lay down a good base of what you're trying to learn.

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(Sleep solidifies new memory which is really cool. So if you learn something new your sleep is even different that night, you have more rapid eye movement sleep - which is dream sleep - but it's also learning sleep. If you learn a bunch of stuff at night before bedtime or in the day, in a good, dense learning day, and then you sleep that night, you have more laying down of that memory and it can be put to good use the next day. If you learn and then you don't sleep it goes away more likely so it's harder to retain. :32)

**V/O:** For those who think caffeine and energy drinks are the answer to get you out of the fog created by a lack of sleep, Dr. Zallek says think again.

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(Caffeine can take away from sleep and keep you from resting well enough to use all the function in your brain in the first place. But it can also sort of falsely help you feel more able than you might be in terms of that knowledge the next day. :17)

Learn more about getting a good night's sleep [here](#).