BOOK REVIEW:

SLEEP SMARTER – SHAWN STEVENSON

This review is interesting for everyone, since sleep is a natural process for all of us. However - in modern society - the importance of qualitative sleep is often underestimated and even not respected. As research shows, sleep is one of the most important aspects when it comes to good health and success in life. Let’s dig into some strategies that will make you have a better sleep and – as a result – a more successful life.
PART 1: KNOW THE VALUE OF SLEEP

What are the **benefits of high quality sleep**? Basically – as Stevenson argues – your immune system will get strengthened, your metabolism will be boosted, your hormones will be balanced, your energy level will rise and your brain will function more effectively. This altogether will make you perform better on whatever task you’re working on during the day.

In more scientific terms, sleep makes sure ‘the waste’ our brain cells produce during daily activities is removed. Therefore sleep literally makes room for new growth and development. Removing and recycling dead brain cells, tossing out toxins and shuttling out waste is a critical brain function and this is possible through the restorative power of sleep.

A lot of people think that – in order to be successful – they have to ‘give up’ sleep and work harder. And YES, it is true that less sleep will allow us to do more things. But what about the **quality and effectiveness** of our work? Studies showed that less rested people not only perform worse, they also take longer to perform tasks. It’s not a question of quantity, but quality.

In the future, try to see sleep as something valuable, something like a ‘special treat’ that will benefit you. Change your perception. Don’t see sleep as an obstacle, but as a gift.

PART 2: GET MORE SUNLIGHT DURING THE DAY

Research proved that getting more sunlight during the day will make you sleep better at night. Why is that? Because of our **circadian timing system or circadian clock**. This biological clock –which is regulated by nerve cells in the hypothalamus - tells our bodies when to wake up and when to go to sleep and helps us control our digestion, immune system, blood pressure, appetite, mental energy and other things. In the image below, you can see how the circadian rhythm manifests itself in human beings. The first morning light (around 6 am) will send signals to the hypothalamus that it’s time to “wake up” and become alert. Moreover, this light exposure will cause your body to produce ‘daylight hormones’ and neurotransmitters such as *cortisol* and *serotonin*.
As opposed to what most people say, cortisol isn’t actually “bad” or “wrong”. On the contrary, it is naturally generated in the morning and makes you want to wake up and be active. It gives you energy. Serotonin too is produced in the morning – through light exposure – and helps bringing about feelings of happiness and well-being. Besides that, serotonin also plays a crucial role in regulating your body’s biological clock. As a result, not getting enough natural light can make your serotonin production and therefore your internal clock suffer.

On the other side of the spectrum of hormones is melatonin. The body will start to naturally produce this hormone in the evening as it gets dark (around 9 pm) and will make you ready for sleep. It therefore has an inverse relationship with cortisol and serotonin. When these are up, melatonin is down. The secretion of this hormone too is heavily impacted by your exposure to natural daylight. If you don’t get enough daylight, the cycle of melatonin production may get confused. Getting better, more qualitative sleep is about encouraging the production of the right hormone at the right time. The key take-away here is to get natural light over day and make it as dark as possible during the night.

Stevenson also makes the following recommendations:

* Get direct sunlight outdoors for about an hour and a half each day (preferably between 6 am and 8:30 am – because this is when your body clock is most responsive to sunlight). This sunlight will boost your natural cortisol levels and fully wake up your system.

* If you’re working an office job, try to take your breaks outside (10-15 mins).

* Even soaking up sunlight behind a window can benefit your circadian timing system, since the light is picked up by your optical receptors and sent to your brain. So if you can work in front of a big window, it should already help a lot. Just be careful for UVA rays, which can penetrate through windows and can increase the risk of skin cancer at the long run. (UVB is needed for vitamin D and you can only get it outdoors)

* Try to avoid sunglasses if possible, since they ‘block out’ the natural sunlight getting soaked up by your optical receptors.

**PART 3: AVOID SCREENS BEFORE BEDTIME**

The big problem with screens of electronic devices is that they display an artificial blue light which triggers the body to produce more daytime hormones such as cortisol. Therefore, your body’s natural preparation for sleep may get disoriented. Research even shows that checking the screen of your laptop, smartphone or television for 2 hours before bedtime can suppress the natural production of melatonin, the hormone that makes us ready for a good night sleep. Remember the inverse relationship between cortisol and melatonin in the previous chapter. When cortisol is up, melatonin is down.

But there is a third chemical in play: dopamine. Our brains are naturally wired to constantly seek out moments of pleasure. However, it is important to note that dopamine is not about pleasure, but about seeking pleasure. It’s about the hunt for the next stimulus. The pleasure itself is just an end result that we receive from the opioid system. And the internet, whether it’s Facebook, Snapchat or Google provides these “pleasure hits” the brain is constantly seeking. These opioid or pleasure hits
are followed by more dopamine, because we want to see what’s next. How is dopamine related to sleep? Not only does it make us addicted to technological gear, the release of dopamine also makes us more alert and awake. It increases the feeling of wakefulness and – as a result – leads to poor sleep. Stevenson recommends us to be very aware of this process. Awareness is the key to changing behaviour and snap yourself out of this dopamine loop.

A few more recommendations by Stevenson to get a better sleep:

* Turn off all screens at least 90 minutes before bedtime in order to allow melatonin and cortisol levels to normalize.

* Switch to other activities before bedtime: read a book, have a nice conversation with family or friends, listen to music, etc. Try to find an enjoyable alternative.

* Turn off the cues to prevent the dopamine loop to unfold. These cues can be visual or auditory. For example: switch off automatic notifications on your phone before bedtime.

* If you want to go a little extreme: buy glasses that block out blue light and give everything a more soft, orange tint. You also have some applications such as f.lux that automatically eliminate the problematic blue light on your Apple computer.

**PART 4: HAVE A CAFFEINE CURFEW**

Caffeine is found in chocolate, coffee, tea and other energy drinks like Red Bull, Coca Cola, etc. In short: things that people love. Caffeine however is a powerful nervous system stimulant and should be avoided before bedtime. The question is: how long before bedtime? Researchers found out that even having a cup of coffee 6 hours before bedtime can cause sleep issues. Caffeine has a half-life of around 5 to 8 hours (depending on your own, biochemical makeup). This means that after 5 to 8 hours, half of the caffeine substance is still in our system. Caffeine, in other words, has long-term effects on our bodies. We therefore need to set a caffeine curfew, especially if we are sensitive to it. For most people, Stevenson recommends to set up this curfew before 2 pm.

Caffeine not only affects your nervous system, it also affects your endocrine system, which is responsible for the secretion of hormones. In this case, two anti-sleep hormones: cortisol and adrenaline. Adrenaline makes you sharp and can surely benefit your work performance but the downside is “the crash-moment”. Caffeine will spike your adrenaline up, but after the peak experience comes the crash, below the baseline. Result? We feel tired, foggy, and irritable. As we’ve seen in the previous chapter, the spike in cortisol levels doesn’t have the best effects on your sleep quality neither.

Some last recommendations on caffeine from Stevenson:

* Try to avoid caffeine at all, or –if possible – set a caffeine curfew before 2 pm. It will depend on how sensitive you are.

* Using caffeine in a smart and strategic way is perfectly acceptable: for people whose cortisol levels are naturally lower than normal, it can be utilized in the morning to help boost your cortisol. Cortisol will help you to increase alertness and focus.
PART 5: BE COOL

Being “cool” refers to having a low enough core body temperature in order to have qualitative sleep. It involves 2 things here:

1) **Sleep in a cool environment.** Research found out that the optimal temperature to sleep in is between 60° to 68°, which is between 15 and 20 Celsius degrees. Anything below or above will cause sleep difficulties.

2) **Be cool emotionally:** Worry and stress are likely to arouse your system and to increase your core body temperature - and therefore - disrupt your sleep. In order to relax before sleeping, try to meditate, read or take a hot bath. This will help you un-stress and sleep better.

Some cool tips:

* On Amazon, you can buy cooling mattrass pads which will help you to lower your core body temperature on hot summer nights.

* Take a warm bath 1½ to 2 hours before bedtime. It will initially increase the body temperature, but eventually your body will cool off to a lower level around bedtime.

PART 6: GET TO BED AT THE RIGHT TIME

“Money time sleep” happens between 10 pm and 2 am. In this time period, the human body gets the most beneficial hormonal secretions and recovery. Melatonin, human growth hormone (HGH, also known as the “youth hormone”) and more are released in their strongest doses during these key hours. In order to keep a vibrant and youthful look, it’s important to back up sleep during these hours.

Among Stevenson, human beings are designed to go to sleep within a few hours after it gets dark. What happens around 10 pm is typically an increase in internal metabolic energy in order to repair, strengthen and rejuvenate our body. If you’re asleep by then, that’s ok. But when you’re not, you risk having a **“second wind energy”**, as Stevenson calls it. This means an increase of metabolic energy that might make it harder for you to fall asleep at later on.

The main **recommendations** from Stevenson sound as follows:

* Don’t get the 10pm to 2am rule to seriously. To enjoy good, qualitative sleep it is important to know that you should go to bed within a few hours of it getting dark outside. This will typically be between 9 - 11 pm, depending on the time of the year. Nature will give you the cues; your job is to accept it.

* Try not to work in ‘night-shifts’. Studies have shown that these are negatively related with proper health. Remember: you always have a choice.
* Know the human sleep cycle. Sleep cycles typically last for 90 minutes each and repeat 4 to 6 times per night. This sleep cycle follows a predictable pattern:

![Sleep Cycle Diagram](image)

BP = Blood Pressure

Stevenson recommends us to plan our sleep duration based on the sleep cycles. The key is trying not to interrupt a sleep cycle. Try to set your alarm after the last block of 90 mins of a sleep cycle.

**PART 7: FIX YOUR GUT TO FIX YOUR SLEEP**

The food you eat not only affects your brain, but also your sleep. Your gut is typically your “second brain” because of all the neurons it consists of and should therefore be treated well. Your gut is important since it produces serotonin and melatonin, the 2 “quality-sleep hormones”. Research even found that the gut contained over 400 times more melatonin than the pineal gland in your brain. You will start to see why treating the gut well by eating the right foods – i.e. “good sleep nutrients” - is very important.

A good functioning gut equals a good **gut microbiome**. Make the good bacteria thrive by avoiding the following things:

- Agricultural chemicals (such as pesticides, fungicides, etc.)
- Processed foods (soft drinks, microwave meals, breakfast cereals, pizza, etc.)
- Antibiotic use (antibiotics usually kill ALL bacteria including the good ones..)
- Chemical food additives and preservatives (such as artificial colours & flavouring, aspartame, high-fructose corn syrup, etc.)

Stevenson further mentions some **“good sleep nutrients”** such as: Selenium, Vitamin C, Tryptophan, Potassium, Calcium, Vitamin D, Omega-3s, Melatonin, Vitamin B6 and probiotics. I’ll leave the Google work for you to figure out which foods are rich in these nutrients. Just make sure you supply yourself with these nutrients on a daily basis. In general: aim to eat organic, locally grown and unprocessed foods.
PART 8: CREATE A SLEEP SANCTUARY

In this part, Stevenson suggests you to make your bedroom a quiet, calm and peaceful place. A lot of people make the mistake of doing to many random activities in their bedroom such as calling, working, painting: whatever it may be. The problem with this is that you are not creating a strong ‘neuro-association’ to sleep when you go in there. Making your bedroom a kind of ‘sleep sanctuary’ can allow you to associate that peaceful, calm atmosphere with a good night of sleep.

So what does a sleep sanctuary look like?

- **Fresh air**: open a window (if you can) or use an air ionizer to keep the air fresh.
- **Plants**: It might seem crazy, but having a plant in your bedroom can do wonders to your sleep. Some plants - such as the *perennial snake plant* – are able to absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen during the night, boosting the air quality in your bedroom as a result.
- **Peaceful, calm, quiet, etc.** You know the deal.

PART 9: HAVE A BIG “O”

Big “O”? What is that supposed to mean? It refers to an *orgasm*. Research found out that – during an orgasm – you and your partner produce a cocktail of chemicals which will promote sleep. These chemicals include:

- **Oxytocin**: the ‘love hormone’ → promotes bonding between people when they’re engaged in intimate activities. Furthermore, it has a calming effect countering the effects of cortisol.
- **Serotonin**: anti-stress neurotransmitter which increases deep, non-REM sleep.
- **Norepinephrine**: anti-stress neurotransmitter which betters the efficacy of REM sleep.
- **Vasopressin**: neurotransmitter which increases sleep quality and reduces levels of cortisol.
- **Prolactin**: hormone linked to sexual satisfaction which makes you sleepy.

PART 10: GET IT BLACKED OUT

Sleeping in a pitch-dark room will improve your sleep tremendously. Why? Again: research. Studies found that artificial light has **devastating impacts on melatonin levels**. Exposure to artificial light during usual hours of sleep could decrease melatonin levels by 50%. You probably begin to understand why people call night-time light “light pollution”. It literally pollutes our bodies, since melatonin is a major support-hormone of your body. It not only helps us to get qualitative sleep but also improves our immune system, normalizes our blood pressure, enhances our DNA protection, etc.

Now, you might think: ‘Oh, that’s all right. I’ll just buy an eye mask to block out the light’. Wrong. Our skin too –just like our eyes - has specific photoreceptors that can pick up light. So, whenever there is any light in your bedroom, your body is actually able to pick it up and will send a message to your brain and organs that can interfere with your sleep. So it’s not just about covering your eyes. It’s about creating a pitch-black room, blocking light not only from outside but also inside your bedroom. How can you do that? Firstly, in order to block out outside lights, you can use “blackout” curtains
(yes, they exist. Do some Google work!). Lights inside your bedroom can come from room lights and electronic devices such as alarm clocks, TV’s, etc. Try to cover them with a towel or get them out of your room.

**PART 11: TRAIN HARD (BUT SMART)**

How are sleep and exercise intertwined? If you exercise, you are actually tearing down your body by creating thousands of tiny micro-tears in your muscle fibers. Sleep then is the ‘healing mechanism’. During sleep, your body will release beneficial hormones and repair mechanisms that will build you up better and stronger than before. That’s why it is so important to get a good night of sleep after a work-out. Only then will the benefits of exercising – such as an enhanced metabolism, a boosted hormone function and an improved insulin sensitivity – positively impact your body and health.

When is the best time to exercise? According to research, exercising in the morning will bring the best benefits to your sleep and health. Why morning? Again, morning exercise can encourage your body to increase the natural production of cortisol and putting the circadian cycle on track (at least, if you’re exercising outside). Furthermore, you allow your body to ‘cool-off’ (see PART 5) which is necessary to prepare yourself for a good night of sleep. This is the ‘problem’ with exercising late in the evening: it increases your core body temperature and – among Stevenson – it can take up to 4 to 6 hours to really ‘cool-off’. Therefore, it might be giving you a harder time finding sleep.

Exercise is not only a way to keep your body young (this – in fact – is scientifically proven since muscles form a reservoir for anti-aging hormones that help protect your DNA from oxidation. Getting lean muscle will activate those hormones and keep you younger as a result), it will also make you sleep better. Especially weight-lifting is very beneficial to your sleep. Weight-lifting triggers your body to produce more anabolic hormones that will make you feel better, look better and sleep better. Stevenson recommends us to lift weights at least 2 days per week to optimize sleep. Does this mean that all we should do is weight-lifting? Of course not. Weight-lifting is essential but you can easily start some other activities around that such as tennis, basketball, etc. Whatever you love. As long as you get a good night of sleep after it.

**PART 12: GET YOUR “FRIENDS” OUT OF YOUR ROOM**

In this part, Stevenson recommends us to move all our “electronic friends” (mobile phones, iPads, laptops, televisions, etc.) out of our room in order to protect our sleep and health. Why? Well, not only because of the reasons discussed in part 3 and 10 (remember the downsides of artificial light) but also because of the **EMF’s or Electro-Magnetic Fields** these devices are emitting. Research found that long-term exposure to these EMF’s can suppress melatonin production. EMF’s are also linked with autoimmune diseases because of the disruption in cellular communication they evoke. Be wary of that. The key message? Don’t keep your electronic devices with you if it’s not needed and especially: get them out of your bedroom!

Tips:

- “But my cell phone functions as my alarm” → Buy an alarm clock with a full shut-off dimmer.
- It is suggested to put all electronic devices at least 6 feet away from your bed (around 2 meters)
**PART 13: LOSE WEIGHT AND DON’T FIND IT AGAIN**

**Being overweight can cause sleep issues.** Research showed that – after consuming a meal – overweight people can produce up to 10 times more cortisol than people with a healthy weight. Let cortisol be the number one “anti-sleep hormone” and you know what’s going on. The big secret of this part is that we should become very aware of the fact that we influence the behaviour of our hormones. Among Stevenson, a combination of hormone-healthy foods, hormone-healthy exercise and hormone-healthy sleep will keep you slim, young and vitalized.

Losing body fat is all about producing the right hormones and avoiding the bad ones. So which are the ‘right’ ones? In this case, these are the ones that use stored body fat for fuel. What about the bad ones? The most important fat-storing hormone is **insulin**. But what provokes it to produce? Carbohydrates: any type. These macronutrients can be found in bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, refined sugary stuff like cakes, pies, cookies and soda. Even fruit. If you really want to lose fat, you should focus on eating more of the other 2 macronutrients: protein and HEALTHY fats. How contradictory: eating fats to lose fat? Yes, it’s true. Your body needs fats to function properly, but the ‘right’ fats which are the unsaturated fats. You can get these fats by consuming fish, nuts, seeds and various kinds of vegetables. Anyway, by eating a higher ratio of protein and healthy fats, your body will naturally produce more **glucagon** instead of insulin. This hormone will evoke the breakdown of stored fatty acids for fuel. In other words: you will burn more fat.

But the relation ‘overweight – sleep issues’ also holds vice versa: **being sleep deprived can also cause obesity.** Stevenson explains that when you’re physically and mentally tired, your brain craves the extra calories to keep everything functioning on at a baseline level. And where can it find these extra calories? Right. Fast carbohydrates: cookies, ice cream, cereals, etc. Moreover, sleep deprived people also carry decreased levels of **leptin** with them. Leptin is known as a satiety hormone and regulates our appetite. With less of this in our tired bodies, we often consume more foods than actually needed. You already start to see a pattern. It’s a massive vicious circle.

Some last **recommendations** by Stevenson:

* If you’re very hungry right before bedtime: consume a high-fat, low-carb snack. If you go to high on the carbs just before bed, the blood sugar crash (after the initial spike) may wake you up. However, try to consume your last meal at least 90 minutes before bedtime.

* Eat more micronutrient-rich foods aka ‘real’ foods. Reconnect with nature by eating a variety of plants, fish, seeds, etc. Skip all processed foods.

* Start your day with a protein and fat rich breakfast. The key to fat loss is to keep insulin down through the first part of the day.

**PART 14: GO EASY ON THE BOTTLE**

The problem with alcohol? The main issue is that alcohol disrupts the most important stage of our sleep: the REM-sleep stage. This is the stage where **memory processing** happens: our short-term memories and experiences get converted into long-term memories. Drinking a bunch of booze before going to bed won’t allow you to get the beneficial effects of REM-sleep and –as a result – your body won’t be able to rejuvenate fully. Another problem of drinking alcohol close to bedtime your
sleep may get interrupted by the urgent need to urinate. Alcohol is *diuretic* or a substance that promotes the production of urine. Therefore it will cause your body to expel more fluids and – besides that - increase the likelihood of dehydration. Alcohol may also increase the downsides of *sleep apnea*, making the breathing during sleep much harder and increase the likelihood of waking up.

**Recommendations** by Stevenson?

° Try to have your last alcoholic drink at least 3 hours before bedtime. Just make sure your body has enough time to eliminate the alcohol out of your system before going to sleep.

° Drink more water. If you do drink alcohol before bedtime, make sure to drink water in between your drinks. This will help to eliminate the ‘hangover-effects’ alcohol has on your body by keeping you hydrated.

**PART 15: PLAY YOUR POSITION**

Most people don’t realize that their sleeping position matters. In fact, it does. The most important thing when it comes to a good sleeping position is maintaining the integrity of your spine. This means: keeping your spine in a right line while you’re lying in bed. The best positions to do is either lying on your back or on your side. Lying on your stomach might compromise the natural curve in your spine. Skipping the pillow might be a good idea then.

Another interesting fact is that you should replace your mattress at least every 7 years. Why? Because the mattress resiliency gets worse every year. Among Stevenson, most mattresses sag 25% within the first 2 years and they continue to degrade more from there on, possibly giving you back problems and muscle tension within your hip and spine.

**PART 16: CALM YOUR INNER CHATTER**

Everyone reading this probably already experienced the following: You prepare for bed, get into it and suddenly start worrying about the things you couldn’t do that day or still have to do. This off course, is highly dysfunctional for your sleep. The best remedy here is called meditation or brain training. Meditation is like a muscle: the more you train your mind, the more calm and present you’ll become over time. Research figured out that meditation is able to increase “feel-good” hormones such as *endorphins*. It also lowers stress hormones like cortisol and even reduces inflammation in the body. Another study even found that advanced meditators have higher baseline levels of melatonin. In short: a perfect combo for a good night of sleep.

The best thing about meditation is that it not only benefits your sleep, but also your work performance. Meditation literally alters the structure of the brain, thickening the regions associated with attention, focus and sensory processing. Meditation can therefore make you more focused when engaging in daily activities. So what is the best time to meditate? In the morning as soon as you wake up or right before bed at night, when you’re operating close to the alpha or theta brain waves. These are the brain wave frequencies that are related to a relaxed, calm and non-thinking mind.
**Personal TIP:** Download the app ‘Headspace’ and get started with guided meditation. It’s a perfect way to start your meditation journey. You can even choose the time you want to meditate and the focus of the guidance (on relationships, performance, health, etc.).

**PART 17: USE SMART SUPPLEMENTATION**

As always: your lifestyle and food choices should be primary. When this is on point, you might consider taking some helpful supplements. Some of the supplementation aids – described by Stevenson – are:

* **Chamomile:** Chamomile tea is an excellent tea to have before bedtime: it relaxes muscles and calms the nervous system.

* **Kava kava:** Preparing a cup of kava kava tea can also be superb idea before bedtime.

* **Valerian:** Herb that is used in medicine for people having difficulties to fall asleep + also promotes uninterrupted sleep. You can take this herb by drinking tea as well.

* **5-HTP, GABA, and L-tryptophan:** isolated chemicals which can be taken in pill form.

Everyone reacts differently towards supplements. Height, weight, gut health, stress levels, inflammation, etc. can all have an influence on how you will react so be cautious of that. Experiment and always start with a low dose to see how you react.

**PART 18: BE EARLY TO RISE**

Our bodies are naturally wired to sleep at night and be awake during the day. This is because of our genetics: our ancestors had no real advantage of staying up at night. Their eyesight sucked in the darkness and therefore they couldn’t see predators. A common argument: “But we don’t live in the woods anymore, don’t we? So why bother?” . Before saying this, be aware that genetic adaptations can take thousands of years to manifest itself. This is just to prove that we should all try to get our sleep when it’s dark outside, and **wake up early** (i.e. shortly after the sunrise) in order to **sync our body clock with the earth’s natural circadian rhythms**. Furthermore, Stevenson argues that your health will be radically improve when you’re honouring your body’s natural hormonal clock.

Some tips on how to rise early in the morning:

* **Get very, very excited:** think of something you really want to do the night before and make this a cue to that triggers you to wake up.

* **Jump out of bed:** Don’t wait too long to get up. Jump out and try to awake your senses: take a cold shower (which I love to do), open the curtains, go for a run, drink a cup of coffee/tea, etc.

* **Put your alarm on the other side of the room:** In this way, you are obliged to stand up and go put it off. It will help you to wake up.
PART 19: USE BODYWORK THAT WORKS

Use massage. Many of us strongly underestimate the impact of massage on sleep. Massage unlocks your sympathetic nervous system (fight-or-flight) and activates your parasympathetic (rest and digest) nervous system. It also is linked with increased serotonin production, oxytocin and a reduction of cortisol and a lot of other health benefits. In short: a perfect combo for a good night of sleep.

A great way to do some ‘self-massage’ is called gut smashing. You lie down on a soft ball (preferably the same size of a soccer ball) and you roll your abdominal muscles over the ball. It should trigger your parasympathetic nervous system. Google it for more information.

PART 20: DRESS FOR THE OCCASION

In this part, Stevenson recommends to NOT wear tight, restrictive clothing to sleep. He links this to our lymphatic system or ‘waste management system’: if you wear too restrictive clothes, the extracellular fluid (or ‘waste’ that our cells produce) can start to pool in different places in the body not getting the chance to circulate. This can cause you to wake up. Try to wear loose, comfy clothes – or none at all – in order to get the best sleep you can get.

PART 21: GET GROUNDED

Each day, try to get in contact with the earth’s surface. They call it “grounding or earthing”. The main benefit of grounding is that it allows negatively charged antioxidants from the earth to enter the body and neutralize positively charged free radicals at sites of inflammation. These free radicals are set off naturally by the body to address cellular damage. Studies have proved that grounding is one of the most effective ways to reduce cardiovascular risks and improve the quality of your blood. It also activates the parasympathetic nervous system and therefore reduces stress.

So: make it a habit to spend some quality time (10 mins or more) with your bare feet on the ground, whether it’s sand, grass or soil. You can even make use of ‘earthing technology’ nowadays such as an earthing mat. Check Google for more information if you are interested!

° THE END °