

NEWS LESSON

The Case for an Extra Hour in Bed

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What makes a weekend morning feel well spent?
2. Would you choose an extra hour in bed or an unhurried breakfast?
3. Can a day off become another thing to organise perfectly?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**duvet**	☐	A	periods of work at set times, such as nights
2	**guilt**	☐	B	a thick, soft cover that you sleep under
3	**association**	☐	C	the bad feeling when you think you did something wrong
4	**hypertension**	☐	D	easy to understand, with nothing difficult in it
5	**straightforward**	☐	E	for always, without ending
6	**commute**	☐	F	another name for high blood pressure
7	**shifts**	☐	G	a connection between two things
8	**permanently**	☐	H	travel regularly between home and work

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Catch-up sleep was linked to slightly lower odds of high blood pressure. The best figure was about eighty-seven minutes, not a whole morning.

1 Saturday morning arrives, and for the first time all week there is no alarm. You could get up at your usual time, make coffee and start being productive. Or you could stay under the duvet for another hour. For years, people have heard that sleeping late at weekends is bad for the body clock, so even a pleasant lie-in can come with a feeling of guilt. However, research discussed at a European heart conference in August 2026 suggests that a modest amount of catch-up sleep may be helpful.

2 Scientists examined data from approximately 40,000 adults in South Korea, collected over seven years. They compared people's sleep on weekdays and weekends with the likelihood of having high blood pressure. Participants who caught up on sleep at weekends had slightly lower odds of hypertension overall. The most favourable association was found around an extra hour and twenty-seven minutes of sleep. That sounds wonderfully precise, but it should not be treated as a magic number that suits everybody.

3 The possible explanation is straightforward. Too little sleep can put stress on the cardiovascular system and interfere with the normal drop in blood pressure during the night. People who work early shifts, commute long distances or look after children may struggle to get enough rest from Monday to Friday. By the weekend, they are running on empty. Sleeping a little longer might give the body an opportunity to recover from some of the strain.

4 There are important limits to the findings. The study showed an association, not proof that staying in bed directly reduces the risk of hypertension. People who sleep longer may differ in other ways, including their working hours or general health. Researchers also warned that very long weekend lie-ins could disturb regular sleep patterns. Sleeping four extra hours is not necessarily better than sleeping one, and it may make Sunday night harder when Monday's alarm is waiting.

5 Experts therefore continue to recommend consistent bedtimes and waking times where possible. Catch-up sleep should not become an excuse for repeatedly cutting back on rest during the week. Nor can extra time in bed replace exercise, a balanced diet or medical care for high blood pressure. The new research simply challenges the idea that every variation in sleep timing must be harmful. Real life rarely allows people to follow a perfect routine.

6 One study does not cancel the advice to keep regular hours. It does suggest that a moderate lie-in after an exhausting week is not necessarily harmful. If you are permanently tired, it is worth looking at the wider pattern: when you go to bed, how well you sleep and what keeps you awake. Rest is not a reward for finishing every task.

Sources: The Guardian. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The study proved that staying in bed directly lowers blood pressure. T F NG
2. The research was discussed at a European heart conference in August 2026. T F NG
3. Researchers warned that very long weekend lie-ins could disturb sleep patterns. T F NG
4. The study found that women benefited more than men. T F NG
5. The most favourable amount of extra sleep was less than ninety minutes. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

disturb **excuse** **interfere** **modest** **opportunity** **precise** **strain** **struggle**

1. The company made only a _____ profit this year, far less than expected.
2. Many students _____ to find quiet places to study in noisy cities.
3. Carrying heavy bags every day can put a _____ on your back.
4. Rain is not a good _____ for missing the meeting.
5. Please do not _____ him while he is working, because he needs to concentrate.
6. A year abroad is a great _____ to practise a language.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. The bridge _____ in 1998 and still carries traffic today. (BUILD)
2. When she got to the station, the train _____ already. (LEAVE)
3. I _____ to bed earlier; now I feel terrible. (SHOULD / GO)
4. She suggested _____ a short walk after lunch. (TAKE)
5. If I _____ more time, I would learn the piano. (HAVE)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Decide if the idea is contrast, reason or result. Some of these words join two sentences and some need a noun.

despite	however	nor	otherwise	therefore	unless	whereas

1. The new phone is expensive. _____ , many people think it is worth the money.
2. My sister enjoys early mornings, _____ I prefer to sleep late.
3. _____ the long hours, she still finds time to exercise.
4. Take a break now; _____ , you will be too tired to finish the work.
5. The roads were closed; _____ , the buses were late.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Should people feel bad about sleeping late on a free day?
2. Would a simple sleep routine make your weekend easier or less free?
3. What would a restful Sunday look like without tracking anything?

9 Role-play: a quiet Saturday morning

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the flatmate who wants to sleep late

It's Saturday and you've had a long, tiring week. You want to stay in bed until ten. Explain why, and suggest a plan that works for both of you.

Student B · the flatmate who wants an early start

You want to go out for breakfast at eight and then tidy the flat. Ask your flatmate to join you. Listen to their reasons and try to agree on a compromise.

Useful phrases

I'd really like to stay in bed this morning.
It's been a long week and I'm exhausted.
Could we go for breakfast a bit later?
I'd rather start early, if that's okay.
That's fair, so how about we meet at nine?
Let's compromise: you tidy now and I'll cook later.

Afterwards, tell the class: what did you agree, and was it a fair compromise?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 B · 2 C · 3 G · 4 F · 5 D · 6 H · 7 A · 8 E

4 True, false or not given

1 F · 2 T · 3 T · 4 NG · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 modest · 2 struggle · 3 strain · 4 excuse · 5 disturb · 6 opportunity

6 Verb forms

1 was built · 2 had left · 3 should have gone · 4 taking · 5 had

7 Language focus

1 However · 2 whereas · 3 Despite · 4 otherwise · 5 therefore

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