

The good life

Live according to your
daily rhythm





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B-society is a global organisation with the mission to widen the time frames in society, in the labour market as well as in the institutions.

Our daily rhythm is genetically determined, and there are great variations as to when and how long an individual needs to sleep during the course of a 24-hour day . Research indicates that there are significant health consequences for B-persons who attempt to adapt to the traditional 9-5 clock-based societies. That is just one reason for arranging social time frames so that they more flexibly accommodate the variety of our individual daily rhythms.



B-society

works for the following:

- Working hours should be adapted to people's different daily rhythms. Make it possible to start work at A-time (7-8 a.m.) or B-time (10-11 a.m.). This will increase the productivity in companies, increase quality of life, decrease sickness absence and reduce stress.
- Schools should adapt to people's different daily rhythms. Research shows most people function as B-people between the ages of 12 and 20. The primary schools and upper secondary schools should reflect this by offering teaching in both A-rhythm and B-rhythm with starting times at either 8 a.m. or 10 a.m.
- The opening hours of kindergartens should be made flexible so they suit the different rhythms of families. For example every fourth institution could introduce new opening hours from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Clear and marked benefits come from a consideration of our biological differences – better health, better learning, increased productivity, better infrastructure utilization, and a general increase in work/life satisfaction and quality of life.

Our daily rhythm is genetic

Recent research has shown that our daily rhythms are genetically based.

B B-person is both a popular and a scientific term for a person who wakes later in the morning and usually does not feel energetic until after 10 a.m. On the other hand, the B-person can be productive until very late in the evening, and will not usually begin to feel sleepy until after midnight or later.

A In contrast, the A-person wakes early in the morning – commonly around 6 a.m. – and may feel energetic right away. Along with this early rising tendency the A-person gets tired early, and consequently will often be asleep around 10 p.m.

About 15-25 % of the population are distinct B-persons while 10-15% are A-persons. Of these 6% are extreme B and 2% are extreme A, while the remaining part of the population are mild A or mild B.

Research in biological rhythms reveals not only large differences in people's individual daily rhythms, but also in their need for sleep. One result is that the actual natural sleep patterns of B-persons are far different from society's demands within the traditional 9 to 5 time structure. Only 35% find it natural to sleep earlier than 12:30 a.m., while the rest prefer to go to sleep later provided that it is possible to listen to the inner biological clock.

The optimal periods for activity and restoration are thus genetically based. For example, research shows that B-persons' temperature is lower in the early morning because of their forced shifting of their own natural rhythms. That helps to explain why they may need time to wake up early in the morning, and why A-persons may feel ready for activity straight away.

B-persons' natural daily rhythm struggles to find a healthy harmony with the 9 to 5 society, and the attempt to adapt to a fixed industrial clock often results in chronic lack of sleep and other negative consequences. It is documented that B-persons get far less sleep during the week than A-persons, and that they spend the weekend compensating for that lack of sleep. On the other hand it is during the weekend that A-persons may have issues with insufficient sleep, especially if they take part in late-night social life on their days off, yet still wake up at the early rising time dictated by their inner clocks.

Disharmony between work and free time, and also between social and biological time can best be described as a physical condition and feeling of jetlag – this "social jetlag" can be experienced by both A- and B-persons.

However, the research results support the conclusion that B-persons will more often report poor quality of sleep, too little sleep and tiredness during day hours than do A-persons. B-persons have to struggle with clock disharmony five days a week, while A-persons face it typically only on the weekends. The close relationship among daily rhythm, well-being, and alertness means that B-persons generally use more stimulants such as coffee, nicotine, sugar and other empty calories in order to adapt to society's A-rhythm in work places, schools and children's institutions. Other consequences of the conflict between the inner and outer clocks can be the use of sleeping medicine or alcohol, as well as an overall feeling of simply not "fitting in," which can contribute to stress and stress-related illnesses.





Create the good life

Increase quality of life by living and working in your own rhythm

Serious societal consequences result from the fact that the main part of today's population does not have the opportunity of living and working according to their natural biological rhythms. When we all have to get up at a similar early hour in order to arrive simultaneously at work, school or other institutions, we create unnecessary stress and strain, both for individuals and for the collective society. When we are rushing all the time, two steps behind, tired or stressed, it becomes difficult to keep the overview, and unconsciously cut ourselves off from the possibility of a harmonious life – one in which work, social relations and quality of life form a synthesis. It is essential to be able to go to work rested to complete necessary tasks, but also because when we do our productive best we feel better about our life and ourselves. This allows us more easily to make time for all the other things that belong in "the good life." But as long as we hold onto the old myth that it is only "the early bird that catches the worm," we will continue to overlook the latent potential lying dormant within the 24 flexible hours of each day.

If you are a B-person it is especially important that you pay attention to how you arrange your 24-hour day. Perhaps with only a few changes you can organise your life to optimise your work capacity and find a better balance between productivity and quality of life.

A flexible life for everyone

Advice for how to create a better everyday life for the benefit of your family, your friends, your work place – and last but not least, for yourself and your healthy well-being.

- Find out when you peak and have the most energy: When during the day do you think most clearly and creatively? When do you get things done with the least effort? Arrange your working hours accordingly, and work during this period.
- Organise your day so you either have a quiet morning (B-person) or a quiet evening (A-person)
- Talk to your boss about introducing flexible working hours at your workplace. Flexible working hours gives you the opportunity to work at those times where you peak mentally and are most rested. Days where you work from home gives you the opportunity to arrange your day as it suits you.
- If you overuse stimulants in the form of nicotine, alcohol, sweets and cakes – or are dependent on sleeping medicine – you should talk to your doctor and get guidance on how to listen to your inner biological clock. The same applies of course if you are experiencing stress to an alarming extent.
- Be aware that your age and sex can affect your daily rhythm. Different daily rhythms take precedence during the human life cycle. Babies and young children are often A-persons even though naturally there are exceptions. However, the large majority of teenagers are B-persons. Adults are either more or less A- or B-persons, though the scale is weighted to the side of B-persons. At the end of life most of us become A-persons again.

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