

People are sleeping more. 18 min extra every night

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Years of scolding from health experts about a good night's rest may be breaking through.

A study in the US showed Americans are finally getting more sleep — about 18 minutes more per weeknight compared with 2003. It may not sound like much, but researchers say it's a positive sign. "If we only got more sleep, we would then see that we actually perform better and would probably be more creative and more productive during the day," said Dr Mathias Basner, the associate professor of sleep and chronobiology in psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, US, and the lead author of the analysis of federal survey data published

this month in the journal 'Sleep'.

The incremental gains took place over 13 years. Basner and his colleague, Dr David F. Dinges, found that Americans gained about 1.4 minutes of sleep per weeknight each year between 2003 and 2016. People also slept more on weekends, though the improvement was not as great — an extra 50 seconds of sleep per weekend night per year, a total gain of about 11 minutes.

On average, Americans get more than eight hours of sleep on weeknights and more on weekends, according to the data. While the gains were significant, they were not universally shared. The researchers, for example, did not find statistically significant gains for the unemployed and others not in the labour force. NYT NEWS SERVICE