



The Effect of Sleep on American Presidents

In a position with as many responsibilities as President of the United States, a lack of sleep is practically inevitable. According to the BBC, President Obama scheduled six hours of sleep per night during his time as president, but given the role, this wasn't always possible, and he usually received less. According to the same source, president Clinton received between four and six hours of sleep per night.

If this is true, both presidents were not receiving sufficient sleep during their times as president. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine stated in a 2021 study that receiving less than six hours of sleep per night is not sufficient for maintaining one's brain health — but we knew this. With less than six hours of sleep, one runs the risk of failing to reach necessary sleep benchmarks, like a sufficient number of REM and NREM cycles, for example, which are necessary for optimal brain function. It's certain that presidents who prioritize sufficient sleep are likely to have sharper cognitive abilities, which enables them to make better-informed political decisions.

Insufficient sleep can also impact a president's emotional resilience, potentially affecting their ability to navigate crises and respond to political challenges with composure. Here, image is extremely important. A president who visibly struggles with fatigue may be perceived as less capable or in control, potentially casting a shadow on their image in the eyes of the American and International public.