

How To SLEEP SOUNDLY



By James and Timothy Tylor
www.StopTinnitusForever.com

Stop Your Tinnitus Forever
By Sleeping Soundly
Every Night!

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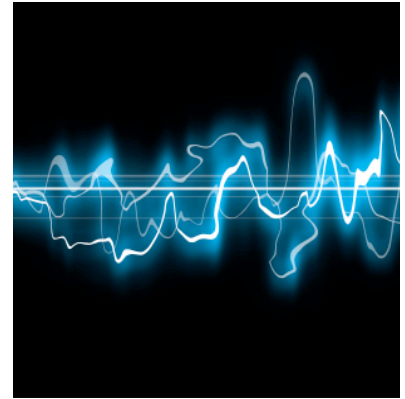
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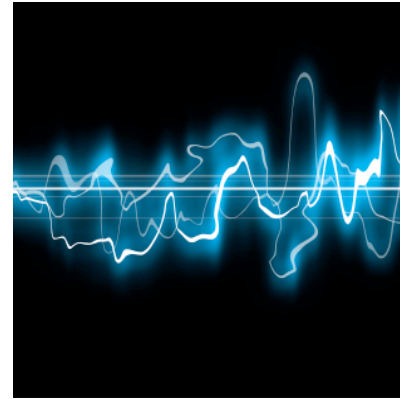
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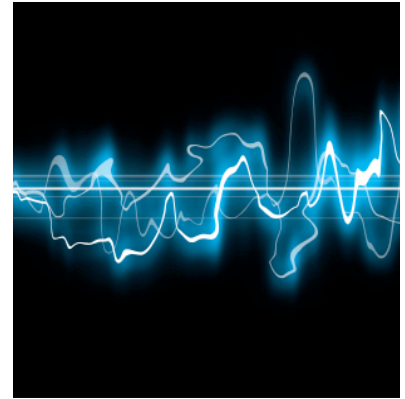
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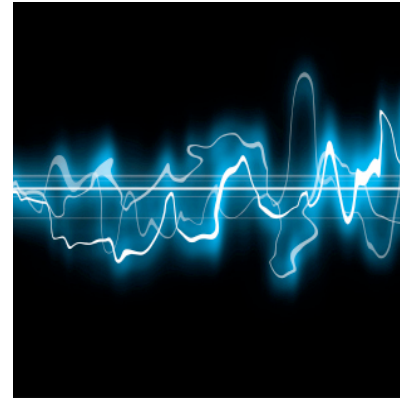
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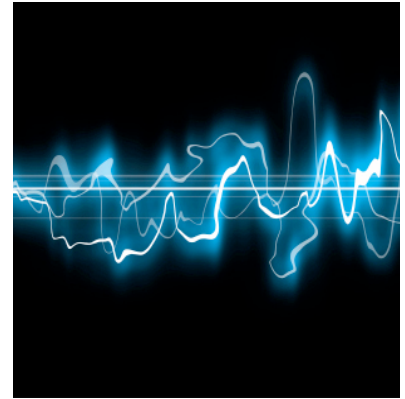
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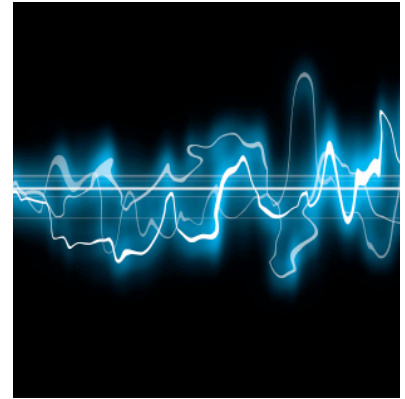
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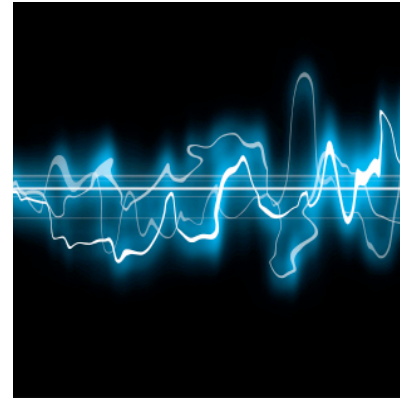
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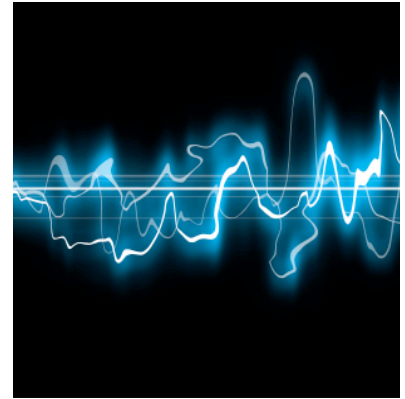
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Stop Tinnitus Forever How To Sleep Soundly

Introduction

It should be a very simple thing to go to sleep. How complex should something be that is an innate ability? It shouldn't take much effort at all. It's an inborn ability, along with other certain bodily functions. When we're newborns, we can eat, sleep and wet the bed. Our automatic functions continue throughout our lives.

So you should just be able to close your eyes, relax and you are off to dreamland. But this is not an option for many, many people. Sleep doesn't come as easy as that.

There are approximately 60 million people who suffer from insomnia. These are statistics from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and considered accurate. When you break that down, that means insomnia affects approximately 40 percent of all women and 30 percent of all men.

This condition seems to drive some people to the edge of madness, as they fight to get enough sleep. The effects can be devastating to those afflicted, and as F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote, "The worst thing in the world is to try to sleep and not to." There are so many with the affliction that sleep clinics have sprung up all over the country in an effort to help.

Insomnia and sleeplessness generally fall into three categories:

1. "Initial" insomnia: where you have difficulty in falling asleep, generally taking 30 minutes or longer to fall into a sleep state.
2. "Middle" insomnia: where after falling asleep you have problems maintaining a sleep state, often remaining awake until the early morning hours.

3. "Late" or "Terminal" insomnia: where you awake early in the morning after less than 6 hours of sleep.

Insomnia can be the symptom of some medical conditions that may require your doctor's advice and medical care. In those cases the cause will be treated, not the insomnia.

If, however, your sleeplessness is due to a pattern of not sleeping, or because your body and mind find it difficult to settle into a state of relaxation necessary for sleep, this book offers you alternative choices for achieving healthy sleep without the use of prescription drugs.

This book will teach you how to:

- Set the mood for a comfortable sleep atmosphere
- Prepare your body for relaxation
- Use colors to stimulate calmness and relaxation
- Understand the importance of exercise
- Use music and other relaxation techniques
- Relieve your mind of anxiety and worry
- Discover the importance of reducing stimulants
- Use herbal teas and warm drinks to promote relaxation
- Use herbs and vitamins to promote natural sleep

After reading this book you will have the information you need to turn your sleepless nights into restful ones, waking in the morning refreshed and alert rather than tired and anxious.

When following the tips in this book, you will have all of the tools needed to stop tossing and turning at night and start enjoying a full night's sleep, naturally. You will wake up feeling rejuvenated and attentive, instead of exhausted and restless. Prepare yourself drift off to dreamland naturally!

What Is Insomnia



Insomnia is basically an inability to sleep and/or to remain asleep for a reasonable period. It gives the feeling of daytime fatigue and impairs normal performance. People with insomnia can't sleep despite being tired, and when they do sleep, it's a light, fitful sleep that leaves them tired when they awake. Sometimes they simply wake up too early.

Here are common symptoms:

- Frequent headaches
- Irritability
- Lack of concentration
- Sleeping better away from home
- Taking longer than 30 or 40 minutes to fall asleep
- Feeling tired and not refreshed upon waking
- Waking repeatedly during the night
- Waking very early and not being able to fall back to sleep
- Only being able to sleep using sleeping pills or alcohol

Insomniacs could be the product of our stress-filled society. It is common knowledge that those with insomnia complain of being unable to close their eyes or rest their minds for any length of time. Often, they are plagued with problems and to-do lists that never got done, worries and concerns that float around in their mind.

Some may only have insomnia for a few nights running, but sometimes it lasts longer. In fact, the affliction is often categorized by how long it lasts. Here are the different types:

Types of Insomnia

Transient Insomnia

Lasts for a few days.

Short-term Insomnia

Lasts no more than three weeks.

Chronic Insomnia

Occurs when a person has difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or experiences non-refreshing sleep for at least three nights a week for one month or longer. Normal daily functioning is usually impaired.

When insomnia is the sole complaint of a patient it is considered Primary Chronic Insomnia. But there are also secondary disorders such as:

Secondary Disorders

Sleep Apnea

A sleep disorder when you temporarily stop breathing while you're sleeping or the breaths that you take are shallow. The temporary breathing can last from a few seconds and go on for a few minutes. These breathing interruptions can happen so many times an hour, even more than 30 times within that 60 minute time span.

Afterwards, you would breathe normal again. It may be accompanied by loud snorting or choking. This condition can interrupt you from getting a good night's sleep. It causes you not to get as much sleep as you need to. Sleep apnea causes you to be tired and sleepy during the day.

Restless Legs Syndrome

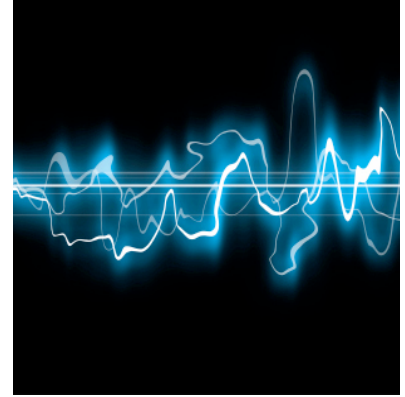
A sleep disorder characterized by unpleasant sensations in the legs or feet. These can be a creeping sensation, a burning, itching, or tugging feeling. Moving the legs around seems to relieve it.

Sometimes certain drugs and medications can create sleep disturbance. This can happen either when taking the medication or while withdrawing from it.

When a person has some emotional difficulties, he can have trouble sleeping. If you find that when you go to bed and lay there worrying about numerous matters or if you are extremely sad or have a loss of interest, and this goes on for a number of weeks, you should consult your physician. Sometimes insomnia is defined as an inability to sleep at conventional times. There is a condition where people fall asleep very late at night or in early morning hours, but then they sleep normally. Or sometimes, as occurs with older people, they have excessive sleepiness in the morning or awaken very early in the morning.

It might help to look at the basic sleep patterns. Doctors use common patterns to identify specific problems.

The Sleep Cycle



Just as basic as food and vital to both emotional and physical well being, sufficient sleep is a basic human need. And it has been found that sleep comes in cycles, on a daily rhythm. You have heard this referred to as the biologic clock. It's the daily cycle of life, which includes sleeping and waking.

The sleep-wake cycles in humans, per scientific study, are shown to be sparked by light signals coming through the eyes. The response to these light signals in the brain is an important factor in sleep and also in keeping the normal rhythm.

The approach of dusk each day prompts the pineal gland in the body to produce the hormone called melatonin. Experts believe that this hormone is critical for the body's time sense. Levels of melatonin increase in darkness and the levels drop after staying in bright light. In proof of these researches, it has been found that people who are totally blind often have trouble sleeping and have other body rhythm problems.

Daily rhythms can get interference or be changed by individual patterns. The monthly menstrual cycle can shift the pattern of sleeping and waking in women. Changes in season can unsettle the sleeping pattern.

Two Sleep Stages

Sleep consists of two separate stages, and understanding these is all part of understanding the sleep cycle. A person progresses through each of these stages about five or six times each night.

Non-Rapid Eye Movement Sleep

The first is called Non-Rapid Eye Movement Sleep (Non-REM). Also called quiet sleep, it is further subdivided into three stages:

Stage 1 (light sleep).

Stage 2 (so-called true sleep).

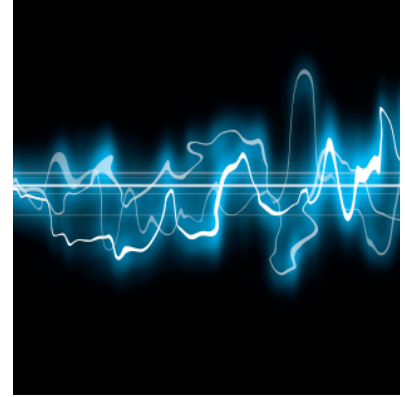
Stage 3 to 4 (deep "slow-wave" or delta sleep).

Rapid Eye Movement Sleep

Rapid Eye-Movement Sleep (REM) sleep is called active sleep. This is where most vivid dreams occur. REM-sleep brain activity during REM-sleep is comparable to brain activity in awake time, but the muscles are as if paralyzed. These phenomena could possibly be a protective mechanism of the body that prevents people from acting out their dreams.

All this appears to be pretty simple and easy to understand, but why do some people have problems with these cycles?

What Causes Insomnia



There is no one reason why some have insomnia and others don't, but most experts do agree that it is often brought on by stress and anxiety.

Reasons Behind Short-Term Insomnia

Short-term insomnia, which is the most common, can be caused by many factors. Sometimes taking certain medications interrupts normal sleep. When you suspect your medications are causing you to lose sleep, you should check with a physician or pharmacist.

Caffeine

Caffeine often disrupts sleep, as we all have experienced at one time or another. Even nicotine can cause wakefulness and quitting smoking can also be a cause of short-term insomnia.

Too Much Light

Depending on the time of day too much or too little light can disrupt sleep. There are many different causes. Another common cause can be a person's reaction to change or stress.

Major Events

Sometimes a major or traumatic event sparks an occurrence. Examples could be:

- Injury or surgery
- The loss of a loved one
- Job loss

Minor Events

Some develop temporary insomnia after a relatively minor event, like extremes in weather, an exam at school, trouble at work or even just traveling. In most of these cases, when the condition resolves, normal sleep returns.

Treatment

Treatment is usually resorted to when the sleepiness continues for more than a few weeks or interferes with the person's normal functioning. A full physical examination would be in order to see if there is some illness at the bottom of the problem.

Female Hormonal Change

We should also be sure to address hormones, as they seem to play a major role in insomnia in women. Although such insomnia is most often temporary, it can certainly play havoc in someone's life.

During menstruation, the level of a certain hormone (progesterone) plunges, causing insomnia. It's been shown that during pregnancy, this same hormone changes within the body greatly in the first three months and the last three months and that insomnia often results. The same is true for menopause. But when you find a woman with chronic insomnia after the age of 50, it is likely due to other causes.

Chronic Insomnia Causes

Chronic Insomnia is another story. It seems to have more deep-seated roots. But it can be a mixture of reasons.

Anxiety and Depression

A large percentage of chronic insomnia cases prove to have some sort of psychological basis. Most often, the cause of insomnia is anxiety and depression.

But it should be noted that insomnia may itself cause emotional problems, so it is often unclear which condition triggered the other, or if they both have a common source. Evidence exists in a national survey by the US Department of Health and Human Services. They found that 47 percent of those reporting severe insomnia also reported feeling a high level of emotional distress.

Pain and Discomfort

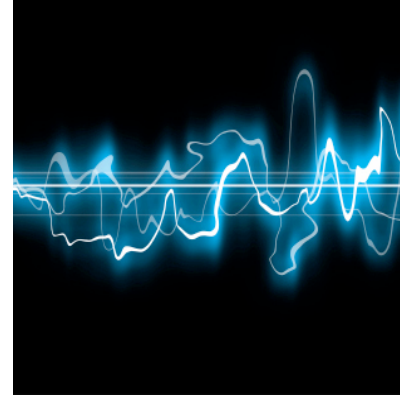
Pain and discomfort from an injury, illness, or disability can also impair sleep. When people are in pain or sick, they generally have medication to help them through the uncomfortable symptoms. Unfortunately, many of these medicines can also cause insomnia to come about or even to get worse.

Other Causes

Other causes have been shown to contribute to insomnia such as substance abuse, working on a shift such as all night shifts at work, high levels of stress hormones and imbalance in hormones. The normal aging process has been known to cause insomnia, possibly due to hormonal changes. There may also be a genetic link.

So, yes, many various factors contribute to this malady, but who suffers from it and does it affect some more than others?

Who Has Insomnia?



Studies have estimated that around one-third of all American and European adults have some insomnia during each year. About 10% or 20% of them suffer severe sleepless problems. It has also been shown that many (about 90%) who have depression suffer from insomnia.

Individuals who have physical complaints, such as headaches and chronic pain with no identifiable cause also complain of insomnia. One study took place where patients who had these complaints were treated for a sleep disorder only and over 65% of those treated said that their headaches were cured.

Others who may suffer from insomnia are those who travel frequently, particularly those who cross time zones in their travel, and people who have post-traumatic stress syndrome.

How Serious is Insomnia?

Most everyone with insomnia complain of attention and memory problems. They also experience more irritability, make more mistakes on the job, and have poorer relationships with their family than people who sleep well.

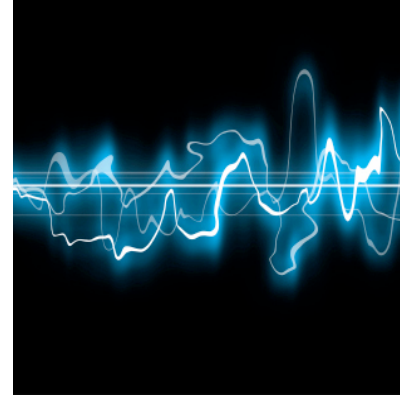
In addition to more daytime sleepiness, insomnia can affect your waking behavior. You may have reduced concentration, perform tasks less adeptly, have a poor learning curve. Where stress and depression can cause insomnia, it has been shown that stress and the effects of it on the body can actually produce emotional problems.

In the US, there are around 1,500 deaths from accidents caused by falling asleep at the wheel. In fact, per some studies, driving when drowsy is as risky as drunk driving.

But rest assured, insomnia is virtually never lethal except in rare cases. There is one genetic disorder called fatal familial insomnia. In this rare degenerative disease, the individual develops severe and unmanageable insomnia, which eventually becomes fatal.

Insomnia definitely takes its toll on the body and lack of sleep does a lot more than make us tired. It can even result in serious health problems. While there are many signs to watch for to judge if you have insomnia, you may need professional help to fully determine if you are suffering from insomnia.

Diagnosing Insomnia



It's important to diagnose the cause of any sleep disturbance in order to restore healthy sleep. Unfortunately, there is not much agreement, even among experts, on the best methods to assess a person's insomnia.

Some difficulty is presented by the nature of insomnia, such as its subjective nature. There are those who think they have insomnia where in actual fact, they are only having brief awakenings and only think they are continuously awake. If a person is suffering from daytime fatigue and impaired concentration and memory, however, the chances are good that their problem classifies as insomnia.

Questionnaire

Questionnaires have been developed for the purpose of determining whether someone has insomnia or other sleep disorders. Your physician may ask a number of questions like how you would describe the sleep problem, how long it's been going on, if you have trouble getting to sleep or in waking up early or the like. He may want to know if you take medications or are withdrawing from stimulants, such as coffee or tobacco.

Sleep Diary

Sometimes it may be suggested that you keep a sleep diary. In this diary, you would record your sleeping habits, including any information from a bed partner who can observe you first-hand.

Every day for two weeks you should write down the following in your sleep diary:

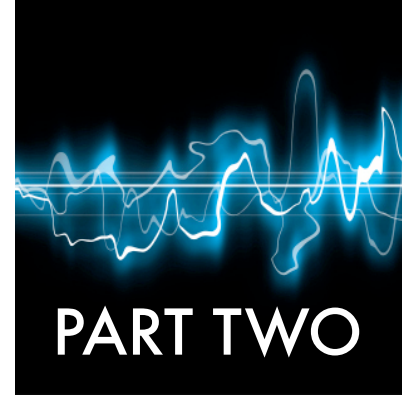
- The time you went to bed and woke up
- Your total sleep hours
- The quality of sleep you feel you got
- What you did during the times that you were awake
- How much caffeine or alcohol you had and the times you had them
- What kinds of food and drink you had and times of consumption
- Your feelings, such as whether you were happy, sad, had stress, etc.
- Any drugs or medications taken and when.

Multiple Sleep Latency Test

There are other tests you might be given, such as something called a Multiple Sleep Latency Test. This test (MSLT) uses a machine that measures the time it takes to fall asleep lying in a quiet room during the day. It has limitations, however, and is usually used after other sleep disorders have been ruled out.

But, in cases where a physician is unable to help, even with the tests he can perform, you may be referred to a sleep disorder clinic. There they will attempt to diagnose and treat your problem.

Behavioral and Diet Changes for Healthy Sleep Habits



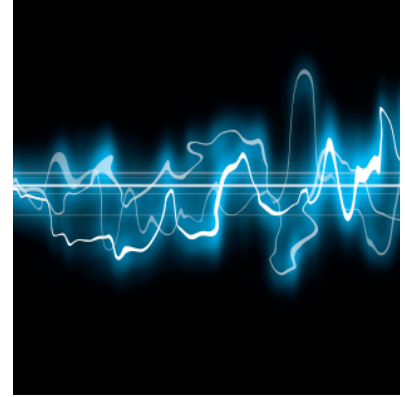
Many times the choice lies with us. Whether or not we want to sleep soundly is very dependent on our habits.

These habits may be good or bad habits. But there's definitely a set of habits that are not desirable for good sleep and we should set goals to reduce these habits. And that's what this chapter is driving at - recognize the bad habits and gradually change the habits, while at the same time following good behavioral and dietary habits for healthy sleep.

Behavioral habits are extremely important to set our body to the sleeping mode a few hours before we fall asleep. Besides following a set of habits before and during bedtime, excessive nighttime stimulants are discouraged to prevent your body from entering the 'hyper' mode.

Dietary habits is also something that we can consciously change for our body to remove stimulants and eat foods that aid in our sleeping.

Behavioral Changes for Healthy Sleep Habits



Here are three behavioral changes you should adopt in order to enjoy a good night's sleep.

Habits at Bedtime

It is essential that your brain has consistency by creating a bedtime schedule so that your body can learn how to fall asleep without medication. Create a sleep strategy to determine the best routine, and plan to follow the routine for one to two weeks before making any alterations.

Your sleep strategy should include:

- A regular bedtime
- A consistent wake time
- A record of any natural supplements you have tried
- Routine activities that are not stimulating such as brushing your teeth or reading

Moving through a regular bedtime process will signal to your brain that it's time to go to sleep. The desired end result of having a sleep strategy is regular sleep that's restful and refreshing.

Plan to get 7-8 hours of sleep nightly, and don't allow yourself to oversleep. If you wake up the same time every day you'll establish a routine. Avoid naps during the day because your body will be confused, and it will interrupt your sleep pattern. You can't bank extra hours of sleep, and trying to sleep later in the morning to make up for sleep lost overnight will leave you feeling tired.

Every person has different sleep habits, so be patient while you work through the process of finding the sleep plan that works best for you.

Sleep Environment

In addition to a regular bedtime schedule, it is important to make your bedroom a place that is conducive to sleep. The more comfortable and relaxing your sleep space is, the better your chances for falling asleep and staying asleep. Consider these tips when creating your relaxing sleep atmosphere:

- Get rid of all annoyances and interruptions.
- Control the room temperature; cooler air (between 65 and 70 degrees F) is typically more comfortable for sleep, however, set the temperature to your preference.
- Allow for room ventilation, if possible. Crack a window slightly to allow for air flow. The circulating fresh air will help you breathe deeply, and provide oxygen that is essential for good sleep.
- Use ear plugs if there are noises outside the bedroom. There are many types of plugs that are specifically for sleeping, so if at first you don't find the perfect pair, try another.

- Mask noises with a white noise machine if you decide to not wear earplugs. Machines are designed specifically for this purpose, or you can use a fan or air conditioner to provide the background noise. This will hide background sounds such as traffic or a barking dog.
- Try using a CD player to play soothing background music.
- Your circadian rhythm, your body's internal clock, relies on light and dark patterns to determine when to signal your body to fall asleep. Keep your room as dark as possible to help your body settle into a sleep state. Use mini-blinds and thick curtains to block light from windows. Try wearing an eye mask to block any remaining light.
- Having a clock by your bedside might be adding to your sleep problem. If you are watching the clock all night long, face it toward the wall so that you can't see the time. Constantly looking at the clock only makes you think about sleep, and lack of sleep, which continues the cycle of sleeplessness.
- Consider a room humidifier for winter months when the air is dry.
- Use your room only for sleeping. Remove the TV, computer, stereo. Your mind should associate your bedroom only with sleep.
- Wear the most comfortable clothing you own. Non-constrictive clothing won't wake you in the middle of the night.

As you can see here, there are many different tips to try to help you sleep better. Each individual has their own unique combination of elements that make up their perfect sleep environment. If one suggestion doesn't work for you, make note and try another until you find out what works best for you.

Sleep Equipment

Also important to the sleep environment is the equipment used when sleeping. Sleep equipment includes the pillow, bedding, mattress, and sleep clothes.

Your mattress should be smooth and firm so that your back is well-supported and your body is comfortable when lying down. Make sure the mattress is supported completely by the bed frame to avoid sagging.

The mattress should also be appropriately sized for your body. Make sure you have a big enough bed so that you have enough space. If you have a single or double bed, consider buying a larger queen or king sized mattress.

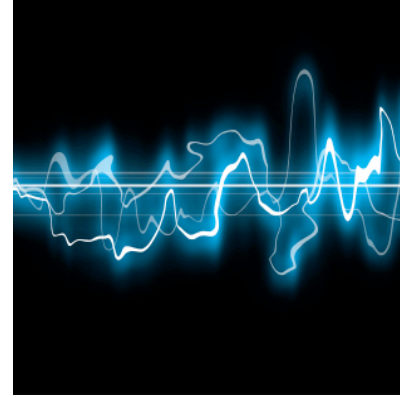
Use whatever style and type of pillow you find most comfortable. It doesn't matter what it's made of as long as it provides you with neck and head support.

The sheets and blankets should be clean and pressed. If you do not like feeling tucked in, loosen the sheets so that your feet can move around freely.

To find the right temperature for you, experiment with different blankets of a variety of weights and materials. Since a cool room is most conducive to sleep, keep the lower temperature in mind when selecting bedding.

Find a sleep position that is comfortable for you and lay in that position so that your body knows it's time for sleep. Whether it is lying on your back, on your side, or on your stomach, your favorite position will help you instantly get relaxed.

Reducing Evening Stimulation



The best nighttime routine is one that leaves you feeling relaxed and ready to go to bed. If you are experiencing trouble falling asleep, it may be beneficial to avoid external stimulations for an hour or so before bedtime.

Stimulation, such as watching television, keeps your mind active and alert. If you find it difficult to give up television before bed, try to select shows that are calming rather than aggressive, action-packed programs.

Guidelines

When reducing your evening stimulation to promote healthy sleep habits, try these tips:

- Keep your bedroom television-free. This will help your mind and body associate the bedroom with sleeping only.
- Don't exercise up to three hours prior to bedtime. Remember that exercise wakes up your body, and unless physical activity is done well before you plan to go to bed, it will work against you when trying to sleep.
- Plan to unwind when returning home from being out. If you jump directly into bed, your mind and body might not have sufficient time to decompress and slip into your evening routine.

- Try reading. Non-technical reading might help make you tired. Avoid work-related or overly complicated material.
- Avoid falling asleep without turning off the light. This will wake you up in the night and disturb your sleep cycles, as well as your bedtime routine.

The goal is to define the fine line between stimulation and relaxation when deciding how to unwind. Being able to easily relax at night will be paramount to your success in falling asleep naturally.

Your Diet Matters



Your diet impacts your ability to fall asleep and maintain sleep at night. By eating a healthy diet, low in processed foods, sugar, fat, and preservatives, you may find that you can stop the cycle of insomnia and improve your overall health.

Guidelines

Consider these guidelines for a healthy sleep diet:

- Follow the recommended daily guidelines for fruits and vegetables.
- Increase the complex carbohydrates in your diet.
- Eat protein that is low in fat, and consider meat substitutes like tofu or veggie burgers.
- Avoid spicy and heavy foods.
- If you need a snack before bed, make it low in fat and sugar.
- Eat your last meal four or more hours before bedtime.

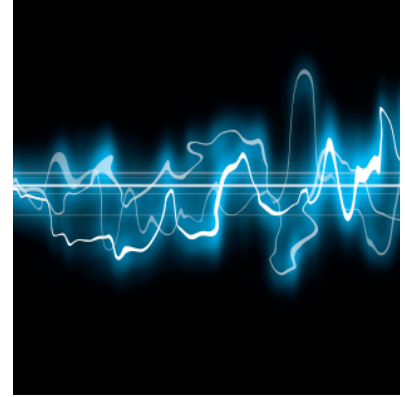
- Try not to overeat at your nighttime meal because you might feel drowsy immediately after eating. Alternatively, be sure to eat enough so that you are not ravenous at bedtime.
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day. A well hydrated body won't wake up in the night because of dehydration. Drink eight glasses, equivalent to 2 liters of water per day.

Watch yourself for food allergies that might be subtly causing you sleep disturbances. Common food allergies that might affect your sleep patterns are wheat, dairy products, corn and chocolate.

A well-balanced, wholesome diet will help you be a healthier person overall. General health is a huge factor in your ability to fall asleep naturally. If your daily intake of food is healthy, your body and mind will be healthy and well-nourished, helping you sleep deeply without waking in the night.

-

Avoid Stimulants



Along with external stimulants there are several internal stimulants that you should try to avoid. The following foods and beverages contain caffeine, sugars, and chemicals that may affect the way you relax, think, and feel.

While you don't need to completely remove these items from your diet, you do need to pay attention and be sure not to ingest them after dinnertime to avoid difficulty falling asleep.

List of Stimulants

Caffeinated Beverages

Caffeine wakes up your body and mind by raising your heart rate. Since it has this effect, it is considered a stimulant. Coffee, colas, teas, and chocolate beverages contain caffeine. Have your last caffeinated beverage at least 3-4 hours prior to bedtime to avoid having difficulty sleeping.

Chocolate

Chocolate has caffeine and sugar, both of which are stimulants that will keep you from having a restful night's sleep. Do not have chocolate for 2-3 hours prior to bedtime.

Alcohol

While alcoholic beverages might make you feel tired and help you fall asleep, the sleep is typically not restful. For example, you might find yourself waking up in the middle of the night feeling dehydrated, then have trouble falling back to sleep. As with any other medication that can become addictive, you do not want to create a nightly dependency on alcohol to fall asleep at night.

Smoking

Tobacco contains nicotine which is a stimulant. Your body's nicotine dependency can cause your body to wake when the level of nicotine in your blood becomes low. Try to not to smoke in the hours before bedtime.

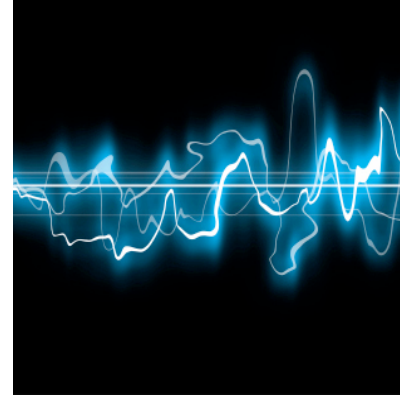
Caffeine in Common Beverages and Drugs	
Beverages	
Brewed coffee, drip method, 5 oz cup	60-180 mg caffeine
Instant coffee, 5 oz. cup	30-120 mg caffeine
Decaffeinated coffee, 5 oz. cup	1-5 mg caffeine
Brewed tea, 5 oz. cup	60-180 mg caffeine
Instant tea, 5 oz. cup	25-50 mg caffeine
Iced Tea, 12 oz. cup	67-76 mg caffeine
Cola, 12 oz. cup	36-47 mg caffeine
Chocolate	
Dark/semisweet, 1 oz.	5-35 mg caffeine
Non-prescription Drugs	
Dexatrim	200 mg caffeine
No Doz	100 mg caffeine
Excedrin	65 mg caffeine

Self-Help Sleep Techniques



There are a total of eight self-help techniques which you could try yourself at the comfort of your own home.

Color Therapy



Using color therapy, or “chromatherapy”, is a unique way to treat a variety of ailments, including, but not limited to, sleep problems. Chromatherapy involves being exposed to color in various ways. Being shown colored lights, visualizing and meditating on a color, being massaged with colored oils, and wearing specific colors can help treat both physically and emotionally caused sleep problems.

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History of Chromatherapy

Chromatherapy has a long history. Ancient Indian beliefs practiced chromatherapy in Ayurvedic medicine, where it was believed that colors corresponded to parts of the body, emotions and spiritual aspects of life. They believed that each of the charkas, areas of energy in the body, linked to a color.

Ancient Egyptians used chromatherapy by breaking up the sunlight with specially created lenses. They built solariums where they practiced chromatherapy.

Chromatherapy as we know it was developed in the late 1600's when scientist Sir Isaac Newton proved that light is a mixture of color from the full range of color we can see.

Modern Day Chromatherapy

Modern-day color therapy came about when Dr. Edwin D. Babbitt penned his Principles of Light and Color. In this publication he outlined how color therapy could be used to treat a variety of maladies, include sleep difficulties.

The 1940's were a time of experimentation with color therapy. During this time, Russian scientist S.V. Krakov experimented with chromatherapy and determined that when he separated light spectrum's wavelengths it had an impact on the nervous system. For example, he found that red light increased blood pressure and impacted the adrenal glands. White light and blue light were found to be relaxing.

How Does Chromatherapy Work

This groundbreaking information is still used today by color therapy practitioners. How does it color therapy work? Color is a part of what makes up light, and light has many different energy waves. When light enters the retina of the eye, it touches the photoreceptor cells in the eye. The photoreceptors turn the light into electrical impulses, which signal the brain to release hormones. By controlling the release of hormones, chromatherapy can be used to treat insomnia and other sleep-related difficulties.

Uses of Chromatherapy

In a time when alternative medicine is becoming more popular, Chromatherapy is actively being used by the medical community to treat disorders such as depression and seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

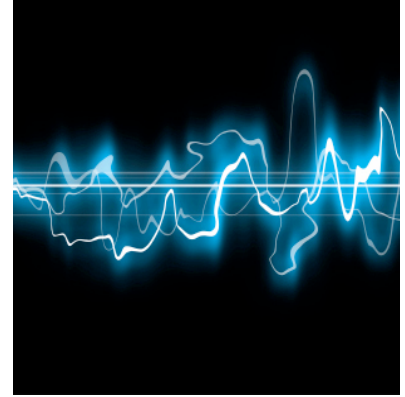
Chromatherapy at Home

Some types of color therapy should only be practiced by trained professionals. However, there are color therapy techniques that can be practiced safely at home. To try chromatherapy on your own, follow these tips. Select hues to wear based on your recommended color. When eating, choose foods that are a particular color. Spend time visualizing a recommended color.

Be aware of the following potential concerns:

- Never replace traditional care with chromatherapy for severe insomnia.
- Epileptics should avoid looking directly at any type of flashing lights.
- When using colored lights, do not look directly into the light. Receive colored light therapy indirectly by looking at an object that is lit by the colored light.
- If you are on prescription medication, check the label for a light sensitivity side effect. Exposure to bright light might cause a problem.

Physical Activity



Getting exercise during the day is an important factor in how well you sleep at night. If you are physically active during the day, your body will be able to relax and fall asleep easier. Exercise helps your body deal with daily stress and anxiety. It impacts the chemicals in your brain, and how much you exercise is directly linked to your physical and emotional health.

Regular exercise will help you fall asleep and maintain a sleep state because your sleep cycles become more consistent and the transition between them becomes more seamless. Try to work exercise into your life daily to avoid sleeplessness.

Frequency and Intensity

When getting physical activity, plan to exercise more than 3-4 hours before bedtime. For the best sleep benefit, be physically active in the late afternoon or early evening.

Aerobic Exercises

Try to be physically active for at least 20-30 minutes a day, 3-4 times per week. Aerobic activities usually work best to remedy insomnia, and activities can range from an easy walk to a rigorous run. By making your heart rate go up, improving your lung capacity, and adding oxygen into your blood, your body will be in better health and you'll be on your way to naturally correcting your sleep problem.

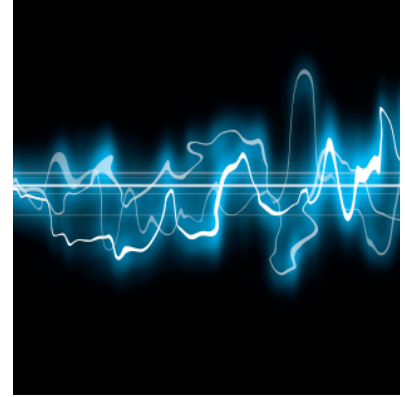
Yoga and Tai Chi

In addition to aerobic exercise, there are other types of physical activity you can do to fight sleeplessness. Consider yoga or Tai Chi. Yoga affects the brain and core muscles and improves blood circulation. Using yogic breathing techniques will help you relax and live with less stress.

Tai Chi incorporates breathing with body movements in a slow-moving style that is perfect for individuals with joint pain or other issues that keep you from high-impact exercise.

If adding 30 minutes of exercise into your daily schedule is too tough, try adding small blocks of physical activity. Making small changes, like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or purposely parking further away from your destination will help you live a healthy, energetic life.

Relaxation Through Meditation



It only stands to reason that the more relaxed you are the more likely you are to fall asleep and maintain a satisfactory sleep state. It's essential to quiet your mind in order to fall asleep quickly. By using meditation you can stop thinking, worrying, or what ever else is going through your head.

There are several different meditation and visualization methods that will help you relax. Try one of these meditation styles:

Focal Point Method

Select a focal point, whether it is a mantra, visual point, or even your own breathing. A mantra is a word or phrase that is repeated either in your mind or out loud to help you focus on meditating. The use of a mantra or other focal point will help keep you on track and keep your mind from wandering.

You need to be disciplined to practice this method of meditation, because thoughts will come into your head and you will be tempted to think about other things. This method will become easier the more you practice it.

Breathing-focused Meditation

Find a comfortable, quiet space and sit on the floor, using a cushion if so desired. Sitting with your hands in your lap, calm your body and close your eyes. Breathe in and out through your nose. Make an effort to concentrate on your breathing, counting each breath in and out until you reach ten. Continue counting in groups of ten until you begin to feel relaxed.

Empty your mind of everything and concentrate only on counting as you inhale and exhale. If thoughts enter your mind, acknowledge that they are there and let them go, again focusing on your breath. When you have finished meditating, become aware of your body once more and stretch before getting up.

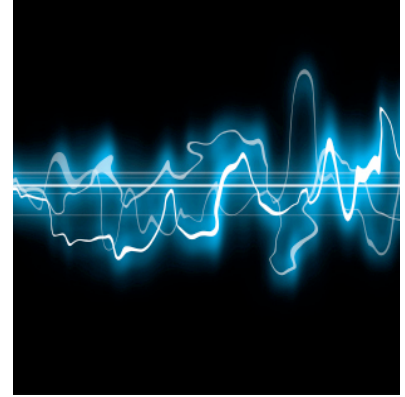
Guided Imagery

This method combines visualization with meditation and hypnosis. This type of meditation is guided, and you are led to visualize relaxation, which helps you feel relaxed. Find a place that is quiet and dimly lit. Using a tape or CD player, play a pre-recorded imagery recording.

Guided imagery usually starts with deep breathing and other deep breathing exercises. When you relax, your imagination comes alive and the recording will guide you through a variety of scenes, using your imagination to help you find peacefulness and relaxation. Common guided imagery scenarios include beach side strolls, mountain hikes, or nature walks through the forest. At the end of your guided imagery session you should feel calm and relaxed.

The aforementioned meditation methods are only a sampling of the wide array of choices available. Experiment with these, and research others, to find one that helps you fight insomnia.

Breathing and Relaxation Techniques



Breathing is the simplest and easiest way to find complete relaxation and stress reduction. The more deeply you breathe, the more serene you will become.

Sleeping with the window open will help the air to circulate in your bedroom and fill your lungs with fresh air. Relaxation techniques will help your body to wind down and prepare for the sleep cycle.

Relaxation Tips

These relaxation tips will help your body wind down and get ready for sleep.

When you first get into bed

Lie down and breathe deeply through your nose. Imagine the air moving into your stomach. On your next inhale, breathe in for four counts. Exhale slowly through your pursed lips, while counting to eight. You will feel the tension leave your body with every exhale. Repeat this technique six to ten times for immediate relaxation. Practice deep breathing daily to develop a healthy habit of regular relaxation. Calming your mind will help you fall asleep.

Before going to bed

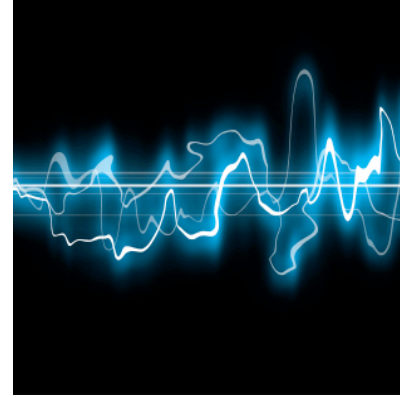
Lie down with your back to the floor and your arms at your side, palms facing upward. Your feet should be comfortably apart. With your eyes closed, mentally concentrate on each part of your body, tensing then releasing each group of muscles.

Starting at the top of your head, release tension as you move slowly down your body. Feel your forehead, eyes and mouth. Work through your shoulders, neck and back. Move down to your toes, then bask in the relaxed state you have achieved.

Focus on your breathing, making sure breath is coming from your stomach. Breathe deeply and slowly, letting go of all your concerns and stress. When your body knows it's okay to let go of your worries and stressors, you'll be able to go to sleep naturally.

There are many other techniques for breathing and relaxation. Through your own experimentation and practice you can find one that works well for you.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Progressive Muscle Relaxation is one of the simplest techniques for relaxation. It teaches you to relax your muscles with an easy two-step process. When you realize that physical relaxation brings mental calmness, you will understand why this works.

First you should consult with your physician for if you have a history of serious injuries, back problems or other muscular problems, doing these exercises can exacerbate pre-existing conditions. If you do these procedures against your doctor's advice, you do so at your own risk.

The two steps in this self-administered procedure are deliberately tensing muscle groups, then releasing the induced tension. Once you learn the procedure, you should spend 10 minutes a day practicing a shortened form of the routine to say in practice. For the first week, it is recommended that you practice the full routine twice a day before moving on to the shortened form.

Practice Suggestions

When you practice, it's wise to follow these suggestions:

1. Practice in a quiet place with no distractions, not even background music.
2. Wear loose clothing
3. Remove your shoes

4. Don't drink, eat or smoke right before practice
5. Never practice this while under the influence of alcohol
6. Sit in a comfortable chair or lying down in bed
7. Get up slowly so you don't experience a drop in blood pressure and thus feel faint.

Recommended Sequence

You will be working with virtually all the major muscle groups in your body. You should start from your feet and work upwards. Here is the sequence recommended:

1. Right foot
2. Right lower leg and foot
3. Entire right leg
4. Left foot
5. Left lower leg and foot
6. Entire left leg
7. Right hand
8. Right forearm and hand
9. Entire right arm
10. Left hand
11. Left forearm and hand
12. Entire left arm
13. Abdomen
14. Chest
15. Neck and shoulders
16. Face
17. Begin with your left side if you are left handed

Procedure

Here is the procedure:

Step One: Tension

Focus your mind on the muscle group; for example, your right hand. Then inhale and simply squeeze the muscles as hard as you can for about 8 seconds. For example, if you are working with your right hand, this would involve making a tight fist with your hand.

It may seem difficult to learn to take responsibility for your body's mechanics, and beginners have a hard time allowing muscles in the intended group to tense. But you will become better with practice. For now, do the best you can. This is all part of the overall PMR learning process. You will become skilled at recognizing the fine muscles as distinct from the rest.

It's important to really feel the tension. Sometimes the procedure will cause the muscles to start to shake, and you will feel some pain. Don't hurt yourself. Always contract the muscles in your feet and your back carefully; i.e., gently but deliberately.

Step Two: Releasing the Tension

This is fun because it is so pleasurable. After the 8 seconds, just quickly and suddenly let go. Let all the tightness and pain flow out of the muscles while you simultaneously exhale.

You will be imagining tightness and pain flowing out of your hand through your fingertips as you exhale. Concentrate to feel the muscles relax. Feel them become loose and limp. Be sure to notice the difference between tension and relaxation. You are focusing on learning to make very subtle distinctions between muscular tension and muscular relaxation.

Stay relaxed for about 15 seconds. Then you will repeat the tension-relaxation cycle.

Full PMR Schedule

Once you have the above down, and you have more of an understanding of the muscle groups and the procedure, you are ready to begin the full PMR training. Follow the list of muscle groups in the sequence below. Work through your entire body. Practice twice a day for a week. Once you achieve a deep sense of physical relaxation; then you can move on to the Shortened PMR schedule.

In the shortened version, you'll be working with summary groups of muscles rather than individual muscle groups, and begin to use cue-controlled relaxation. There are four summary muscle groups and these are the lower limbs; the abdomen and chest; the arms, shoulders and neck; and the face. You will focus here on the complete group.

Cue-controlled Relaxation

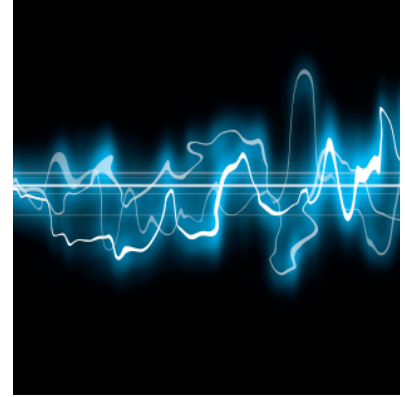
In this procedure, you will use the same tension-relaxation procedure as in the full PMR, but you will work with the summary groups of muscles. You will also put more focus on your breathing during both tension and relaxation.

Inhale slowly as you apply and hold the tension. Then, when you let the tension go and exhale, say a cue word to yourself. Some suggestions for cue words/phrases include: "Relax," "Let it go," "It's okay," etc.

After you have practiced for about a week and twice daily, you will have enough proficiency to practice it under other conditions and with distractions.

You can then move on to the final process of Deep Muscle Relaxation. In this process, you use your imagination, starting at the top of your head and then working down through your body, and think of and then relax the various muscle groups using your cue word(s).

Sleep Inducing Music and Sounds



Using noise as a tool to help fall asleep has been done since the beginning of time. The earliest form of this technique is the lullaby, which has successfully soothed even the most colicky baby.

Recommended Music

There are many CDs and sound devices on the market today that are designed to have the same effect as a mother singing or humming a child to sleep. Here are a few suggestions:

- Relaxing classical music CDs or tapes are a wonderful way to relax and put your mind at ease. Look for “Baroque Music” by Mozart, “Lullaby” by Brahms, and “Waltzes” by Strauss. This is only a small sampling of the many selections available.
- Try something soothing and modern. Ambient Electronica, which is also called “downtempo” and “chillout”, is a great way to unwind. Gently mixing an ongoing techno-style beat, a taste of house-style music for irregular progressions, and unique rhythms, Ambient Electronica has soft melodies and calming sound effects. A few good choices to try are Aphex Twin, Brian Eno, The Orb, and Future Sound of London.

- When trying New Age/Tribal music there are many recordings to choose from. The sound of this style is similar to Ambient Electronica, but unique non-electronic instruments like the harpsichord, chimes, bells, and didgeridoos are used. The beat is often similar to that of a drum circle and sometimes involves guttural throat sounds and chants.
- If you'd prefer to stay away from music, there is always non-musical sound effect CDs or tapes. These often feature babbling brooks, waves, rain, whale songs, waterfalls, and other sounds found in nature. If you are a city dweller that is having trouble sleeping because it is too quiet, there are recordings of city noises such as fire engines, traffic, and airplanes just for you.
- Sound machines are widely available and can be found at many different price points. Usually about the size of an alarm clock, they typically come with a selection of sounds to pick from. You can select how the recordings play, either as an ongoing loop or for a preset length of time. Some sound machines are even built into alarm clocks, and can be used to gently awaken you. When deciding which style of unit to purchase, keep in mind that the units that play synthesized sounds are best, because they most closely imitate the natural sound. The second choice is a sound device that only plays recorded samples.
- The style of music that works best depends entirely on the individual. Some people respond better to non-linear music, while others find it easier to drift off to sleep with soothing percussion in the background. Some prefer random beats and tempo, others like a constant pattern of music. Try several different types to find the style that you prefer.

Brain Music

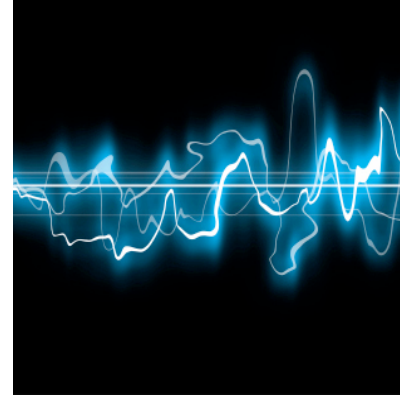
An interesting fact aside, music's relationship with sleep is the current focus of a study being conducted by the University of Toronto's psychiatry department and Toronto Western Hospital.

In their sleep clinic, they are investigating "brain music". Brain music is EEG readings, converted to music via a computer program designed to compose customized music based on the EEG readings. Each sleeper's brain waves are watched and studied. The scientists determine which rhythmic and tonal sounds the individual is most responsive to and they input it into a computer. A computer program is used to develop a personalized "soundtrack" of music that will invoke the same brain wave patterns when the person is trying to fall asleep later.

There is evidence that shows this personalized method of music therapy is highly effective. Obviously researchers are very interested in pursuing this method of relaxation since it is typically effective and does not involve possibly habit forming medication.

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Get Rid of Worry and Anxiety



Are you someone whose mind is filled with thoughts of your family, your finances, your job and the future, when you are trying to fall asleep? Do you find it hard to stop thinking and /or worrying about things long enough to drift off?

If your mind is busy at bedtime, it can lead to constant tossing and turning and insomnia.

If you worry about situations in life, there are a few techniques you can use to help put the worry out of your mind, and fall asleep.

Techniques to Reduce Worry

Personal “Worry Notebook”

First, realize that now is the time to sleep, and the situations and events that are causing you stress will be there tomorrow. Try making a “Worry Notebook.” In a notebook designated for this purpose, create a list of what’s causing you stress and anxiety before you go to bed. Then go through the list and identify which items can be dealt with tomorrow. The list of items on your list for tomorrow then becomes your to-do list for the next day. This will help you feel more in control and positive about situation.

In separate section of your notebook, create a list of things that you worry about but are out of your control. Reconfirm to yourself that you have no power to change these things.

When you have finished your lists, put away the notebook and remind yourself that you have put these things out of your mind, and onto paper, and will not think about them again until tomorrow. If you find yourself thinking about these stressors during the night, firmly remind yourself that you have put away the notebook until the morning and now is sleep time.

Keep A Diary

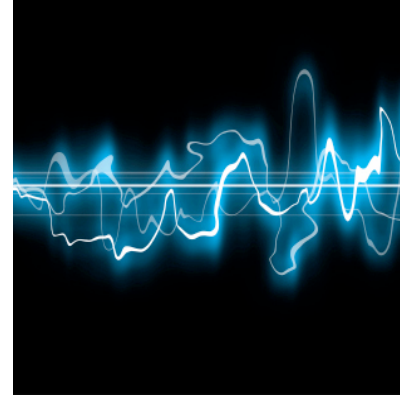
Another idea for getting rid of your worry and anxiety is to write in a diary daily. Along with a record of your day, be sure to include what bothers you and causes you stress. The main point of this exercise is to put your feelings on paper, thus releasing you from thinking and worrying about them at night.

For both of these techniques, the act of writing down your anxiety and worry, gives you permission to rest at night and handle your feelings the next day.

Clear Your Mind

In addition to these techniques, consider using the relaxation tips detailed in the previous chapter. Yoga and soft music or relaxing sounds may help to clear your mind. Consider trying light reading to keep your mind off worrisome thoughts. If you teach your mind to relax, you will find it easier to achieve a night of restful sleep.

Bath Time



A soothing warm bath an hour or so before bedtime will relax you and help you feel sleepy. Do not try to go to sleep immediately following the bath because warm water has a stimulating effect on your body by raising your body temperature. After the bath, you will probably find yourself getting drowsy as your body temperature returns to normal.

How does a warm bath help you sleep better? The warm water will relax your major muscle groups, help your circulatory system, and raise your body temperature. When your core temperature returns to normal about an hour after the bath, you'll still feel relaxed and comfortable and your body will be ready for sleep.

Create Soothing Bath Environment

Creating a peaceful bath time experience is easy and enjoyable. To make a soothing bath environment, light candles and use dim lighting in the bathroom. Experiment with scented oils or incense. Put on some light, tranquil music, and enjoy the mellow environment.

Another way to make your bath special is to add herbs to the water. Make a blended herb to take advantage of the herb's relaxing qualities. Put the sachet in the tub when it's filling, and hold it under the hot water while it steeps. Unwind in the tub while enjoying the herbal scents. A few comforting herbs to try are lavender, chamomile, mint, passion flower, and lime flower.

There are many aromatic oils on the market that are created to induce relaxation. About 4-5 drops of the essential oil is added to the bath after the tub is filled. When deciding on an essential oil to use, try rose, chamomile, lavender, hops, ylang-ylang, vetiver, or neroli for a calming bath.

Bath powder is a third choice of enhancements that can be added to your bath. This recipe for bath powder should be added to the water while you are filling the tub.

Milk & Honey Bath Powder

½ cup honey

3 cups powdered milk

Lavender buds

Preparation

Mix all ingredients well in a large bowl. Add several tablespoons of the milk bath to warm water in the tub. Store any remaining mixture in a sealed container.

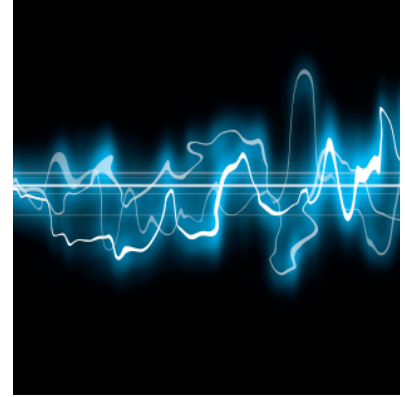
Bath time is a great way to encourage relaxation and drowsiness. Experiment with various herbs and oils to find the ones that work best for you.

Herbal Remedies and Supplements



There are a total of 10 herbs which you could try yourself at the comfort of your own home. Most of these herbs are inexpensive and easy to prepare. Besides herbal remedies, certain vitamins are essential to a good night's sleep. Try to derive the natural source of these vitamins and minerals instead of relying on supplements which are synthetic.

Your Body's Natural Hormones



Melatonin (chemically named 5-methoxy-N-acetyltryptamine) is a naturally occurring hormone in humans. The pineal gland, a tiny organ at the center of our brains, secretes melatonin at night to help our bodies maintain a sleep schedule.

Introduction to Melatonin

The body's internal clock that tells us when to sleep and when to wake up is the body's circadian rhythm. This rhythm is regulated by melatonin.

Darkness encourages the pineal gland to release melatonin, while light represses the release of melatonin. Researchers have found that the pineal gland's release of, and the production of, melatonin decreases as we get older. This explains why young people typically have less sleep-related problems than older people.

Scientists have synthesized naturally occurring melatonin, and it is now available over-the-counter as a supplement. No prescription is needed, and the supplement is available in drug and health food stores in the United States.

Melatonin is not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or any other government agency. Since it is naturally occurring in some foods, the U.S. Dietary Supplement & Education Act of 1994 permits it to be available as a dietary supplement.

Success of Melatonin

Melatonin is has proven to be successful when used to treat sleep problems. Two of the sleep situations most helped by melatonin supplementation are insomnia related to jet-lag and delayed sleep-phase disorders.

How much melatonin should you take? Each individual should begin with a small amount of melatonin (about 1 mg), and increase their dosage if needed. Melatonin comes in pill form and range most commonly from 1 mg to 3 mg.

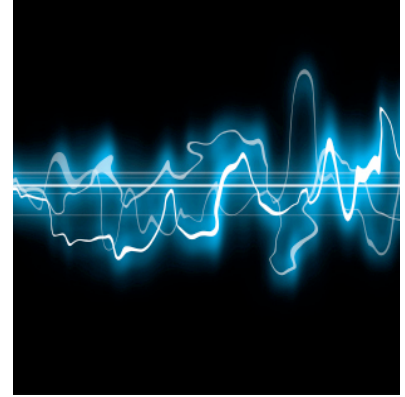
When Should you take Melatonin?

For maximum effectiveness, take melatonin about a half an hour prior to bed time. If you regularly sleep during the nighttime, you should not take melatonin during the day because it can impact your circadian rhythm. The opposite is true if you sleep during the day and work at night. If you want to prevent jet lag when traveling across many time zones, take a dose prior to flying and a second dose 30 minutes before going to bed.

As with any supplement, there are several issues to consider. Although melatonin has been used for a long time without problems or side effects, it is not FDA-approved, and is unregulated by any regulatory agency. Anything you ingest that is not FDA-approved does not have a seal of approval regarding the supplement's safety or purity, and the effectiveness of the product cannot be guaranteed. Another concern is the lack of study and information regarding interactions with other medicines.

Consult a doctor before taking melatonin if you have diabetes, a depressive disorder, an auto-immune disease, epilepsy, lymphoproliferative disorder, leukemia, or are taking an MAO inhibitor. This product should be used by adults only and is not for use by children, teens, or pregnant or breast-feeding women.

Benefits of Chamomile



Matricaria camomilla, commonly called “Chamomile”, is native to southern and central Europe. This flowering plant is now widely grown in the United States, Argentina, Australia, Egypt and northern Africa. The leaves and flowers are dried and used as tea, either in teabags or in loose tea form.

For centuries, chamomile has been used as a sleep-promoting supplement. One of the benefits of using chamomile as a sleep aid is that it does not need to be taken over a long period of time to be effective. Chamomile can be used to treat anxiety and insomnia on the spot.

Usage

There are a few ways to use chamomile. It can be placed in a sachet under the pillow. Try brewing a tea and drink it 30-45 minutes prior to going to sleep. Chamomile is most effective in treating transient (or mild) insomnia.

The naturally occurring chemical in chamomile that promotes drowsiness and encourages sleep is called chrysin. Chrysin is also found in passion flower (*Passiflora incarnates*), which is another herbal sleep aid and anxiety reducer.

If you find your insomnia is due to congestion and/or allergies, chamomile works as anti-histamine to reduce swelling from allergies and help you sleep better. However, chamomile can create a similar allergic reaction to that of ragweed and other plants in the same family like aster or chrysanthemum. Avoid taking chamomile if you have these allergies.

Recipes

Chamomile Tea Recipe

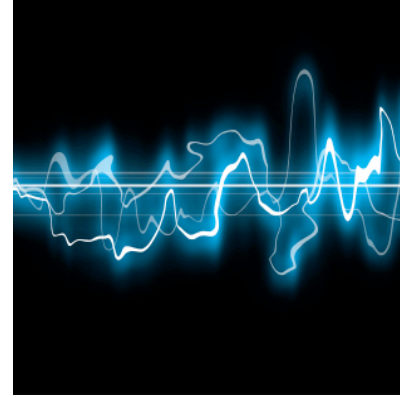
(one serving)

- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon dried chamomile flowers
- lemon juice
- honey

Preparation

Add the chamomile to boiling water either using a tea infuser or directly into the water. Cover and boil for 35-40 seconds. Remove the saucepan from the heat and let the tea steep for one minute. If using loose tea, remove with a strainer. Serve with honey and a twist of lemon. For an added calming effect, use a few leaves of Lemon Balm, also called *Melissa officinalis*, instead of the lemon juice.

Soothing Properties of Lavender



Lavender originated in the western Mediterranean and Arabians are believed to have been the first to domesticate the flowering shrubbery. The Romans later spread the growing and cultivation of the plant across Europe. The Pilgrims brought lavender to America. Lavender was also one of the first plants brought to Australia in the 1800's.

Many herb gardens contain garden grown or container grown lavender. Lavender is grown in somewhat alkaline soil, in a sunny location with good drainage.

Properties and Usage

Lavender's essential oils act as a tranquilizer to calm the central nervous system, making it highly effective as an herbal remedy for insomnia. The dried flowers and leaves can be brewed and drunk in a tea, or the plant's essential oils can be extracted from the plant.

Essential oils can be applied to the skin as a muscle relaxant, or the scent can be inhaled as used in aromatherapy. Since the feet are known as an area of the body that quickly absorbs topically applied products, massaging lavender oil into the feet will have a calming effect. The essential oil can be vaporized in a vaporizer or added to a warm bath and inhaled. You can also create a sachet of the dried leaves and flowers, sprinkle with essential lavender oil, and slip it under your pillow.

Some people who apply lavender topically have experienced an allergic reaction when the oil contacts the skin. Always conduct an allergy test on a small patch of skin to test for sensitivity prior to using a full application.

It's also important to note that not all lavender species have the same calming effects. Spanish lavender, for example, is used to invigorate and wake up the body.

Recipes

Lavender & Mint Tea

(one serving)

1 teaspoon fresh lavender flowers (or ½ teaspoon dried)

1 ½ - 2 tablespoons fresh mint leaves (or 2 teaspoons dried)

1 cup water

Other herbs like rosemary, lemon balm or lemon verbena, or rose geranium for added flavor

Preparation

Using a teapot, mix the lavender and mint. You can use a tea infuser or simply add the loose leaves and strain it later. Add boiling water and let it steep for five minutes.

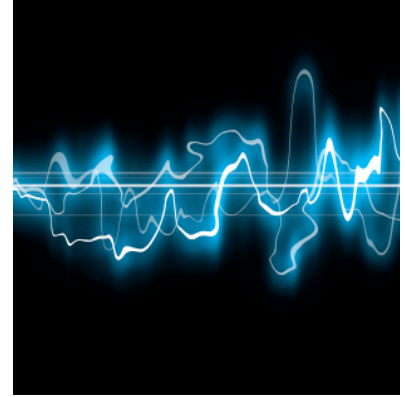
Handmade Lavender Sachet

- Dried or fresh lavender
- Lavender oil
- A cloth or handkerchief
- 1 large needle to fit a ribbon, 1 regular sized needle
- Thread, ¼" wide ribbon

Preparation

1. Prepare your handkerchief by folding in half, then folding in half a second time, creating a pouch. If you prefer a crisp look, iron the edges.
2. Using the threaded needle, sew three of the four sides.
3. Fill the pouch with lavender through the unsown side. Use enough of the lavender to fill the pouch, but don't overstuff it. The final product will resemble a bean bag. Add approximately 8-10 drops of essential oil to the dried lavender.
4. With the larger needle threaded with ribbon, loosely sew the open side to keep all of the sachet contents inside.
5. When sealed, knot the ribbon and enjoy your homemade sachet!

Medicinal Properties of Valerian Root



Valeriana officinalis, otherwise known as “Valerian Root”, is considered to be one of the most effective natural remedies available for insomnia. To see the benefits of valerian root, the herb must be taken regularly over a period of about one month to see results. After taking valerian root for about a month, you will find that it encourages relaxation and deep sleep.

Valerian root flowers late in the spring, and it is typically found in pastures and heath land in the wild. The rhizomes and roots are the parts of the plant that are used for most herbal remedies. Most often the valerian root is collected in September and dried to make widely available herbal products.

Properties and Usage

At Switzerland’s Nestle Research Laboratories, researchers P.D. Leatherwood, Ph.D., and F. Chauffard, Ph.D., determined that the efficacious dose of valerian as a sleep aid is 450 mg. Higher doses cause grogginess without being more effective. Leatherwood also found in a separate study that valerian root was not only effective as a relaxant, but also improved the quality of sleep.

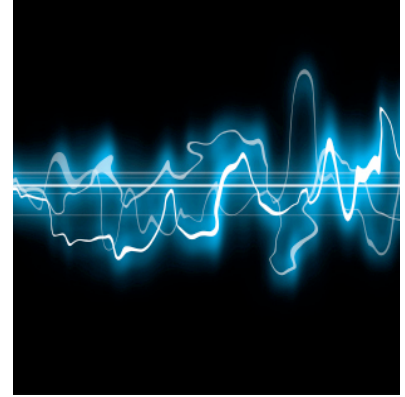
It is understood that valerian root's impact on the body is similar to that of benzodiazepine, an ingredient in Valium™. One of the advantages of valerian root over other sedatives is that there is not next day cloudiness or grogginess. It has been said that Valium's name came from valerian root, but it's important to note that they are chemically completely different and should not be considered to be related.

Prescribed sleep aids can be toxic, however, valerian root is non-toxic and does not hinder the ability to drive nor does it negatively interact with alcohol. Valerian root is used to provide relief from anxiety disorders, and acts as a sedative to encourage restful sleep.

Consumption

Herbalists sometime recommend taking fresh valerian root over the extract because of the possibility of a delayed stimulant effect on some people. Depending on your body chemistry, valerian root sometimes causes an initial sedative effect, then several hours later provides an energy surge, obviously not a desirable trait when taken as a sleep aid. The fresh valerian root is less likely cause a delayed stimulant effect.

A World of Other Herbs



There are also other herbs which are not as common but still very effective in helping you to sleep soundly.

Kava

Piper methysticum, also called “Kava”, is found mainly in Samoa and Tonga in western Polynesia, as well as most of Melanesia and in Micronesia. This shrub is part of the pepper family (Piperaceae).

Kava is widely available in health food stores and comes in several forms. It’s used as an on-the-spot treatment for anxiety. Most popular is the kava extract, which is available in a convenient spray that can be kept handy for a quick spritz under the tongue when in need of immediate anxiety relief. Raw kava is also available, but it is recommended to purchase the high grade lateral root for best results.

Professional herbalists say that kava’s effective daily dose is between 70 and 200 mg of kavalactones. Kavalactones are major active components of kava that have the psychoactive impact. The best dose to encourage a restful night’s sleep is 150-200 mg, taken about 20-30 minutes before going to sleep.

Lemon Balm

Melissa officianalis, commonly known as “Lemon Balm”, has an enjoyable lemon flavor, and is often used in a relaxing and tasty tea.

Found mainly in northern Africa and southern Europe, this perennial herb is part of the mint family. It can be grown in an herb garden with well-drained soil, and lemon balm does well in sandy soil with full sun.

Try a lemon balm tea by adding 2 teaspoons dried lemon balm to 1 cup of boiling water. Brew the tea for 10 minutes and drink immediately before bedtime.

Passion Flower

Passiflora incarnata, also known as “passion flower”, is often used as a relaxant, and is taken to calm the muscles and digestive system, and aid in digestion. It is taken in tea form.

Passion flower grows in the southern US and Latin America, and is also known by its folk names Passion Vine and Maypops. Throughout history passion flower has been used as a substitute for tobacco and as a tranquilizer.

Some herbalists consider passion flower to be the best herbal remedy for treating intransigent insomnia. Passion flower is not addictive and provides relief from sleeplessness. There are no known side effects, and passion flower can be used by the elderly and children without concern.

Dried passion flower makes a highly effective tea. To brew passion flower tea, steep 1 teaspoon of dried herb in one cup of boiling water for 15 minutes. Drink tea 30 minutes before bed time.

California Poppy

Eschscholtzia californica, commonly called “California poppy” contains protopine. Protopine has a similar effect as morphine on the brain. The California poppy does not have the same narcotic as its sister the Opium poppy, although there is a resemblance in its structure. California poppy is not addictive. Scientists have not actively studied the effects of California poppy so there are no guidelines for dosage.

Hops

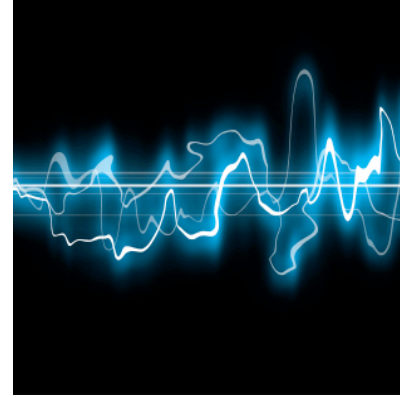
Humulus lupulus, also known as “hops”, are the main flavoring ingredient in beer. Hops are the strobiles, or fruit, of the plant. The hops plant is a member of the cannibis family. Hops are usually used in conjunction with other herbs when being used for its sedative qualities, although it can be effectively used on its own as well. Hops come as dried stobiles, capsules, and tablets, and are commonly used as a relaxing tea or as a sachet placed underneath the pillow.

To make a sachet, follow the previously given lavender sachet instructions, only replace the lavender with a mixture of ¼ cup hop stobiles, 1/8 cup chamomile flowers, and 1/8 cup lavender. Sprinkle with lavender oil and sew open side. Enjoy the calming scents provided by your new sachet.

Honey

Try mixing honey into warmed milk or herbal teas to benefit from its sedating qualities. Add one teaspoon honey and one drop vanilla extract to a cup of warm milk and enjoy immediately before going to sleep.

Vitamin and Mineral Supplements



By adding vitamins and minerals to your balanced diet, you might find relief from sleeplessness. Many people are not getting enough of certain vitamins and minerals that are needed for sleeping well. Kava

One of these nutritional supplements may help:

Nutritional Supplements

Calcium

Too little calcium in your diet can cause the inability to sleep. Combine a daily 600mg supplement with food for the best effect.

Magnesium

A deficiency in magnesium can cause nervousness resulting in shallow sleeping and the inability to stay asleep. A supplement of 250g taken daily, or the addition of magnesium-rich foods such as almonds, kelp and wheat bran can help.

Vitamin B-6 (pyridoxine)

Vitamin B-6 is needed to produce the levels of serotonin required by the body to trigger sleep. The recommended dosage of B-6 is 50-100mg daily, and can be taken in nutritional yeast form and mixed into a glass of fruit juice.

Vitamin B-12 (cobalamin)

If you don't get enough B-12, you may experience grogginess, confusion, or memory loss, and insomnia. B-12 is often combined with B-5, and is found naturally in wheat germ, bananas, peanuts and sunflower seeds. If taken as a supplement, the recommended dosage is 25mg per day.

Vitamin B-5 (pantothenic acid)

Too little B-5 can cause insomnia and tiredness. Vitamin B-5 works as an anxiety reducer, and a daily dose of 100mg is recommended.

Folic acid

The synthetic supplement of folic acid is processed by the body more effectively than folic acid found in nature. Too little folic acid can cause insomnia. Foods containing folic acid include leafy roughage, orange juice, beans and fortified breakfast cereal. The recommended dosage is 400mg per day.

Copper

According to a recent study, pre-menopausal women with a deficiency in copper commonly have difficulty falling asleep. In this study, women taking 2mg of copper daily fell asleep quicker and felt more refreshed when waking. A good way to include more copper in your diet is by eating cooked oysters and lobster.

A balanced diet is the best way to combat vitamin deficiencies. You can try adding a few supplements to see if you notice a substantial difference. If you do not see a notable change, stop supplementing and focus of eating well and exercising regularly.

Other Alternatives



There are three other techniques that can help you improve your sleep habits.

These are the following:

Stimulus Control Therapy

Stimulus control therapy comes from the idea that a person with chronic insomnia starts to associate bedtime and the bedroom with not being able to sleep. The whole idea of stimulus control comes into play by only using the bedroom for sleeping, nothing else. If you are awake, you leave the bedroom and go somewhere else. You will limit the time spent in the bedroom for any non-sleep activities.

Paradoxical Intention

Another approach is Paradoxical intention. Using this approach, you do the opposite of what you want or fear and take it to the extreme. Rather than trying unsuccessfully to go to sleep night after night, try to stay awake and do something instead. This is confronting the fear and hopefully, eliminating it.

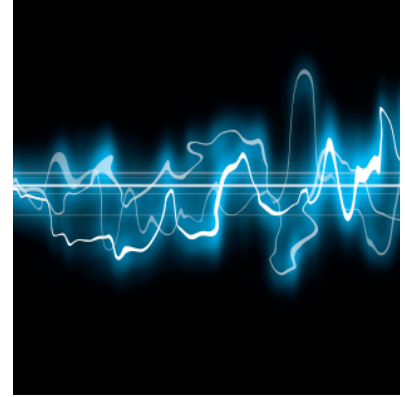
Sleep Restriction

Sleep restriction is based on the idea that people require different amounts of sleep. Someone with insomnia often stays in bed thinking that they will get more sleep, but this really is just increasing frustration and making sleep more difficult.

In sleep restriction therapy the amount of non-sleeping time a person spends in bed is reduced. The insomniac determines his average total sleep time for two weeks, then only spends the time he has spent sleeping on the average in bed each night. No TV for two hours before falling asleep.

Now, let's see how light affects the body's rhythm and how it can be used to help insomnia.

Light for Healing



Light therapy is a treatment used for people who suffer from certain sleep disorders called circadian rhythm disorders. The word “circadian” means to occur in a cycle of about 24 hours.

Circadian Rhythm

This particular rhythm has to do with the function of darkness and light rather than the actual time of day. Circadian rhythms affect how you feel sleepy or alert at regular times every day. This, in conjunction with your internal clock, tells you when it’s time to be asleep and when it’s time to be awake.

People with a circadian rhythm sleep disorder have their natural sleep time overlap their regular awake activities. Your clock is “set” by your exposure to bright light such as sunlight. There are other factors as well, but this is the concept that Light therapy is based upon.

How Does It Work

The goal is to combine a healthy sleep pattern with an internal clock that is set at the right time. Then good sleep can occur. Light therapy can “re-set” a clock that is not operating correctly. The procedure is very simple and safe, but a person should check with their doctor before embarking upon this therapy.

The person receives this therapy by sitting a few feet away from a box-like device that emits bright fluorescent light. He sits in front of the light, at a specified distance, for approximately 30-60 minutes after waking in the morning.

Timing of this therapy really depends on the type of insomnia of the individual. An example would be people who can't sleep at night when they go to bed. Light therapy in the morning and restricting bright light at night may be helpful.

Bright Light Therapy

Bright light therapy can be done at home with the use of a light box. The light box emits a standard dosage of white light but should always be used within the proper limits for light intensity and duration of exposure.

Bright light therapy has not been known to show any major side effects.

Sleep Disorders in Children



There's nothing more frustrating for a parent than a child who won't sleep or can't sleep or who sleeps irregularly. But there is something you can do to resolve this!

A very common sleep problem with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers is a disorder that stems from issues of the parent and child sleeping together. There are many children who insist on being nursed to sleep or on having a parent lie beside them until he or she falls asleep. Parents don't realize sometimes that these well-meaning habits have created a difficulty.

When the child awakens and finds the parent is not beside them, they may not be able to settle back into sleep. This can lead to frequent nightly arousals, unpleasant for both the child and the parent.

How To Solve The Problem

One way of solving this is to put the child to bed when he or she is drowsy but still awake. You need to, in other words, put the child to bed at a time that coincides with natural sleep onset rather than an arbitrary hour the parent has chosen as bedtime.

Of course, most children protest when their bedtime routine is changed. But coping with any crying can be done if you maintain communication with your child, explaining what is happening in a soothing and comforting way. Talking in a slow, quiet voice to a child who is distressed or angry can help calm both the parent and the child. You don't have to go to the extreme of allowing infants to cry themselves to sleep. This is unnecessary and potentially harmful.

Nighttime snacks and drinks, with the exception of water, should be avoided, for obvious reasons. They can increase arousals in the night and also affect dental health.

Sometimes a child will be exposed to frightening media or other events, such as a death in the family or arrival of a new brother or sister. More severe stressors, can exist and which should be taken into account and explored.

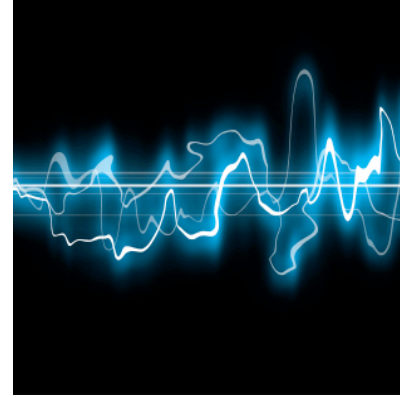
Many problems can be settled with a child by giving them a small amount of extra attention and conversation at bedtime. You would, of course, keep it calm. No tickling fights.

Based on the same warnings that adults must pay attention to in taking medications, drugs are not recommended for children, even in very tiny doses. Children are much more resilient than adults and will respond well to lots of love and affection.

Teenage Sleeping Problems

Sleeping problems are common among teenagers; where they may feel wide awake in the late-evening hours, not being able to sleep until 3 or 4 AM. Then at school, their performance is impaired. They may even fall asleep in the morning classes. Changing such a sleep cycle is a challenge, but likely can be accomplished by setting the morning wake-up time 15 minutes earlier each successive day until the desired target is reached. Accompany this by exposure to bright natural light.

Conclusion



Insomnia isn't an unusual problem, and everyone experiences it at one time or another. But when it comes regularly or exists chronically, something must be done. Since a variety of health problems can accompany the condition, it is important to address it effectively.

When you crawl into bed and you can't to sleep, you become frustrated and toss and turn. And feel worse in the morning and know you have to do something to fix this dilemma.

Sleeping is one of our most basic and natural functions so we need to pay close attention and work at identifying the reasons why we are unable to sleep. Once we do that, taking some steps toward self-healing is well within your power.

Fortunately, there are many effective treatments for insomnia. With recent research showing that self-management techniques for controlling insomnia can work better than using medications, this book has listed many that an individual can take to manage their insomnia problem.

The methods outlined in this book can help you achieve sleep filled, restful nights without resorting to dangerous narcotics and other drugs.

It's a good idea to try one or two of the methods at first, then add others as necessary to find a strategy that works for you. Choose a technique that appeals to you that you can begin immediately and stick with it.

In some cases you may need to be disciplined and determined if your goal is to avoid the use of prescription medication. When you first start applying some of the techniques described here, stick to the same bedtime schedule for a week or two.

A good idea is to keep track of your sleeping habits using a sleep log to record bedtime, wake time and any details regarding your sleeping patterns and the techniques you have used to aid in the sleep process on any given night.

After you have observed how your body and your own specific metabolism have adjusted to your new treatments, you can begin modifying your routine to incorporate more or less of the methods described in this book as needed. Be sure to note adjustments to your treatment in your sleep log.

Remember, as with any health issue, never hesitate to consult your doctor if your symptoms raise concern for your overall health.

Your doctor can work with you to determine the best treatment for your case, including the natural remedies outlined in this book. The most important thing is your health.