



Keys to Putting Your Insomnia to Rest

Improving your sleep hygiene

- Create a “preparation for sleep” routine 30-60 minutes prior to the time you want to fall sleep:
 - Plan your schedule for the next day
 - Relaxing activities (listen to music, meditation, guided relaxation, etc.)
 - Take a hot shower, as your body temperature cools it induces sleep
 - Drink warm milk, it contains an enzyme that induces sleep
 - Have a small healthy snack
 - Drink hot herbal tea, again it will increase your body temperature temporarily
 - Wash up and brush those teeth
 - Put your clock out of sight (watching the time only increases anxiety)
 - Focus on a pleasant feeling or thought that brings contentment
- Curtail time spent in bed when unable to sleep, after 10-15 minutes get up:
 - Sit in a different place in your home and engaging in a calming activity. This can be journaling, reading, or listening to music
 - Be careful if watching TV, you may be tempted to stay up later when you could have fallen asleep
 - If you were worrying while in bed, sit and write down all your worries. Then return to each worry and generate resolutions or actions you can take.
- When you have the physical sensation you are going to fall asleep, return to bed. If you are unable to fall asleep after 10-15 minutes, get up and go through the above steps again... and again... as necessary. Although this exercise is draining, it will break the association your body has developed with being in bed and worrying. Your body will eventually be retrained to associate being in bed with sleeping!!!
- Engage in your sleep preparation routine and go to bed at the same time every evening. Get up at the same time every morning, regardless of the amount of sleep obtained.
- If fatigued, restrict naps to 20-30 minutes. Use an alarm. Sleeping longer and engaging in deep sleep will disrupt your evening sleep pattern.

Things to avoid

- Do not use your bed for other activities (studying, watching TV, etc). This disturbs your body’s association with bed and sleeping.
- Do not perform physical activity within four hours of sleeping.
- Avoid caffeine (coffee, soda, green/black teas, etc.), alcohol, and nicotine. Especially in the late afternoon.

Golden Rules

- Do not use your bed for anything except sleeping or sexual activity
- Do not lie in bed becoming frustrated you cannot sleep, get up!

If your insomnia is chronic:

- Engage in therapy to understanding mental health issues that might be complicating your sleep problems
- Seek an evaluation by a physician to discuss whether the use of prescription medication is an option.

Tips taken from “Clinical Assessment and Treatment of Insomnia.” Professional Psychology: Research and Practice. Pallesen, Nordhus, Havik, and Nielsen. (2001), Vol. 32, No. 2, 115-124.