

Trouble Sleeping? Insomnia Cures Are Here!

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I yawn, stretch my arms behind my head and stare at the ceiling. I've been in bed for a few minutes. Ahhh, the peaceful quiet all around. The room is dark. The kids are asleep. It's an expansive moment for my mind. My mind seems to fill the entire room.

Okay, it's been 20 minutes now. The novel meditative moment has passed. Now my mind seems to be filling up like a bowl that's been left outside in a torrential downpour. I can't seem to slow down or empty out my mind. So many things to think about, not the least of which is why in tarnation can't I fall asleep?

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I am tired, but cannot sleep. I begin to feel agitated and become physically restless. I turn this way... I turn that way. I cross and uncross my legs. I lay on my stomach, side and back. Each passing moment lends itself to increased anger and frustration. Now my mind has jumped ahead to tomorrow, lining up all those things I have to accomplish knowing that I'll only do so by dragging this haggard, exhausted and fatigued body around for the entire day. This process goes deeply into the night.

Any of that sound familiar?

Recent estimates indicate that approximately 25 million Americans suffer from chronic insomnia. Some reasons for insomnia include:

1. Restless Leg Syndrome
2. Circadian Rhythm Disorders
3. Depression
4. Alcohol and other drug abuse
5. Life changes and/or accumulation of life stressors
6. Anxiety
7. Sleep Apnea

You should consult with your physician in order to determine the exact cause of your sleep problems. He/she may order a sleep study, give you a depression screen, check social stressors, order a blood panel to check for vitamin and mineral deficiencies, suggest you stop drinking, give an anxiety scale or any number of interventions to identify a cause and get you focused on appropriate solutions.

In the meantime here are a few "Do's and Don'ts" on how to reclaim your beauty sleep.

1. When you lay down to sleep, deepen and lengthen your breathing patterns -- shoot for five second inhales and five second exhales. You'll be taking 6 breathes per minute. This takes some practice but works nicely.
2. Take a deep breath and hold it. While holding your breathe, tense up the muscles throughout your entire body and hold both for 30 seconds. Exhale completely and relax. Take several relaxed breathes and repeat three times.

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3. Choose any relaxing color (blue, green, yellow, etc). Place your hands on your stomach and imagine that you are expanding a colored balloon in your stomach. Exhale an insomnia/anxiety color (red, black, etc) through your mouth. Continue this for 5–10–50 times, whatever it takes. It is impossible to focus on your body/breath while entertaining thoughts.
4. Take a hot shower or bath before bed, or get up and do so if you are unable to fall asleep within 15 minutes.
5. Take some sleep food for the brain. Before going to bed eat 1 ounce of protein, 1 ounce of cheese and 5 grapes or the equivalent.
6. Get out of bed if you have not fallen asleep within 15 minutes. The brain is quite easily programmed. I don't want your brain to associate "bed" with "awake."
7. Once you're out of bed do not watch TV, get on the computer, listen to stimulating music, turn on a bunch of lights or do anything else that stimulates your brain into high gear.
8. Once out of bed do sit quietly, meditate on emptying the mind, listen to quiet, soothing music or do some "light" reading. The research shows that deep meditation is as restorative as sleep and takes less time than sleeping for 8 hours.
9. Purchase a Brain Entrainment CD and some ear buds (they are the most comfortable to sleep on). Make sure the CD is designed for sleep. I won't go into all the scientific details here. Just know that the brain needs to be in delta wave state 60 minutes for you to wake up feeling fresh. My favorite is "Sleeping Through The Rain" by a company you can find at www.hemi-sync.com. Don't try this on just a boom box. The ear buds are very important to make this work.
10. Make sure your bedroom is dark. Lights out!
11. Exercise regularly. Exercise does a fantastic job of

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treatment. After all, the persistent inability to sleep, the constant fatigue, and the frustration of failing to get any rest night after night takes its toll. Fortunately, there are plenty of options available for people who suffer from insomnia, and an effective insomnia treatment can be found by those who need one.

The first thing to do when looking for an insomnia treatment is to look at insomnia prevention. Eliminating caffeine in the evening hours, exercising in the early evening, avoiding television and the internet near bed time, and getting to bed early are all excellent ways to prevent insomnia before it starts. And prevention is the best way to start treatment.

Probably the best-known insomnia treatment is the classic glass of warm milk. For as long as anyone can remember, when somebody has trouble falling asleep, someone has recommended a nice glass of warm milk. The reasons for its effectiveness are still not entirely understood, but warm milk does help people fall asleep. Though it will not necessarily help someone who is suffering from chronic insomnia, it will help people who just need a little something that will help them relax enough to get to sleep.

When the insomnia is a little more stubborn, stronger methods may be necessary. There are several herbal insomnia treatments available and they can be very effective assistants when someone is having trouble falling asleep. The most common herbal treatments include ingredients such as lavender, chamomile, or valerian and they can be very effective when sleep will not come otherwise.

Another option for people who need help falling asleep is melatonin, a naturally-occurring hormone. This hormone is vital in regulating human sleep cycles and, when taken in pill form, it can help people get their insomnia under control and fall asleep when they need to fall asleep. And because it is a naturally occurring hormone in mammals, it is not as hazardous as some of the stronger insomnia treatments.

Unfortunately, some people do not respond to any of these methods and need a stronger insomnia treatment. Which means, of course, sleeping pills. Admittedly, sleeping pills are very effective. However, they also carry a risk of dependency and even addiction and should, therefore, be used sparingly. But, for people who are suffering from extreme, chronic insomnia, there is sometimes no other choice and sleeping pills are needed to finally get a good night's sleep. While it is not a method that should be taken lightly, serious insomnia sometimes require serious measures and sleeping pills are an extremely effective insomnia treatment.

Insomnia treatment is vital for people who want to start getting a good night's sleep again. And there are several treatment options available for people who are suffering from an inability to sleep, ranging from simple methods of prevention to the use of sleeping pills. But the best method is one created by sitting down with a doctor and putting together an insomnia treatment plan that tailor made for the person who is struggling with sleep.

Sleep HQ: your guide to sleep apnea and getting a good night's sleep.

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