

- **Use your bed only for sleeping** – don't read or watch TV in bed. Train your brain and body to think about the bed as a place for sleeping.
- **If you can't fall asleep, get up** and do something that you enjoy, such as taking a shower, relaxing or listening to music. When you start feeling tired, go back to bed.

DO SOME RELAXATION EXERCISES

• Breathing exercise –

☞ Taking any posture that is comfortable (e.g. sitting in a chair, lying on a bed) then close your eyes.

☞ Learn to breathe slowly, continuously and deeply. The breathing is done by the movement of the abdomen muscles (The breath goes in when our chest and abdomen expand, while we draw in our breath deeply)

☞ While breathing, observe yourself breathing in and breathing out.

• Muscular Relaxation Exercise –

☞ Lie down flat, facing upon a mat or bed and keeping your hand aligning with body then closing your eyes.



☞ Breathe slowly, continuously and deeply and beginning from your toes, slowly relax each part of body.

☞ Concentrate on your toes and say to yourself "My toes are relaxed, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti..."

☞ In this way, move up your body- toes, sole, ankle, calf, knee, thigh... head.

WHAT ABOUT MEDICATION?

While medication can help temporarily, it does not solve the sleeping problem. First try to change your sleeping habits as well as your daily habits.

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR?

- If your sleeping problem persists after trying the good habits and relaxation exercises
- If your sleeping problems seriously affects you at home, work or school
- If you notice symptoms such as chest pain and shortness of breath
- If your sleeping problem becomes more frequent or more serious



- If your sleeping problem results from high anxiety, stress, depression or trauma

- If you experience physical pain



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Sleeping Problems

A Self-Help Guide to Insomnia



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WHEN DO YOU HAVE A SLEEPING PROBLEM?

If you have one or more of these symptoms for longer than a week, you may have a sleeping problem:

- You can't fall asleep even when exhausted
- You wake up frequently during the night
- When you wake up during the night, you can't fall asleep again
- You do not feel refreshed when you wake up in the morning
- You need medicine or alcohol to help you fall asleep
- You wake up earlier than planned
- You have nightmares
- You have restless legs
- You can't concentrate well

Sleeping well at night is important for good health. It refreshes you and allows you to concentrate during the day. On average, adults need 8 hours sleep at night to function well during the day. Unfortunately, many people, have sleeping problems.

POSSIBLE EFFECTS

- Exhaustion
- Mood swings and irritation
- Difficulties thinking clearly
- Poor concentration and poor memory
- Difficulties coping with day-to-day stress
- Weak immune system
- Lack of energy

POSSIBLE CAUSES

- Drinking coffee, tea or energy drinks, particularly in the late afternoon or evening
- Eating too much before going to bed
- Drinking alcohol before going to bed
- Taking illicit drugs
- Sleeping too much during the day
- Going to bed at irregular times

Sleep is a significant need of every human being.

- Stress, depression or anxiety
- Having experienced trauma
- Physical pain
- Taking medication that has a negative effect on the quality of sleep

SOLUTIONS

CREATE GOOD HABITS

- Prepare a room or place for sleeping which has **fresh air**, is **quiet**, and **dark**. Heat, noise and brightness can interrupt your sleep.
- Go to bed and get up **at the same time everyday**.
- **Avoid sleeping long hours during the day** as this makes it difficult to sleep at night. If you feel sleepy during the day, you could lay down from 20 to 30 minutes maximum, immediately after lunch.
- **Avoid activities that stimulate or stress you before going to bed**, such as strenuous physical exercise or discussing a problem. Gentle exercise such as an evening walk, stretching or meditation is good.
- **Avoid eating during the last 2 to 3 hours**



before you go to bed.

- **Limit caffeine and alcohol.** Avoid drinking alcohol or caffeine 8 hours before going to bed. Alcohol makes it easier to fall sleep, but it affects the quality of your sleep.
- **Do not smoke** before going to bed and try to give up smoking completely. Smoking can make it harder to fall asleep and also affects the quality of your sleep.