

Can't Sleep? Try Some of These Sleep Tips.

Does your brain go into overdrive as soon as your head hits the pillow? Or do you fall asleep and then wake up two hours later? Maybe one of these unconventional tips will help you get to sleep and stay asleep so you can wake up rested and refreshed.

✓NAP EVERY DAY

To make napping work, you must stick to these 3 rules:

- Nap at the same time every day, which allows your body to regulate itself to fall asleep more quickly at that time.
- A 10-20 minute power nap provides enough sleep to help you feel refreshed and more alert, yet it won't interfere with falling asleep at night.
- The optimal time for napping is 20-30 minutes after lunch, usually early afternoon.

✓FORCE YOUR WORRIES

If worrying kicks in just after you close your eyes, schedule a daily "worry time" well before you go to sleep. Choose a 15 minute period at the same time every day when you try to think of every possible worry, and then tell them to a trusted confidante or write in a journal.

✓GET OUT IN THE SUN

When you wake up, don't lounge around in bed. Don't even stay

inside. Get out in the morning sun soon after getting up. The bright sunlight (or any bright light) tells your body's natural biological clock that it's time to wake up, and that same clock will then be set to tell your body it's time to go to sleep about 14 to 16 hours later.

✓AVOID HOT BATHS

The body needs to lower its temperature in order to fall asleep, so a hot bath will actually keep you up. If you enjoy a soak in a hot bath, just be sure to finish your bath at least 2 hours before bedtime so that your body has enough time to cool down. To reduce any built-up stress or tension, enjoy a hot pack applied to your neck and shoulders before going to bed.

✓MAKE YOUR ROOM COLDER

Again, your body needs to cool down to sleep so do what you can to make your room cool. This will also allow you to nestle into your blankets and some people find that action very soothing.

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Treatments

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"Wake up Feeling Good."

✓EXERCISE INTENSELY

Don't just "exercise," but do so intensely, to the point of feeling physical exhaustion. At the end of the day, intense exercise is probably the single best way to induce deep, restorative sleep. "Intense" should be relative to your capability. For some this may mean running 5 miles, for others it may mean a brisk 20 minute walk that elevates the heart rate. Physical tiredness is essential to getting a good night's sleep.

✓BLOCK OUT NOISE

White noise is restful, and even more importantly, it means that you won't be woken up with every little thump that the house makes. A fan is ideal because it does double duty of providing consistent soft background noise as well as keeping the room cool. Similarly, an air cleaner will serve to help keep your room free of dust and provide white noise.

You can also buy a white noise machine or download an app that will provide several white noise options like the sound of rain, wind, and more. Many people prefer pink noise, which includes more varied sounds such as a waterfall or babbling brook.

✓MANAGE YOUR HEALTH

For many of us, physical discomfort or pain can be the main problem when it comes to getting a restful night's sleep. Try a new sleeping position using pillows: Sleep on your back with a pillow supporting your knees. Then prop a pillow behind and to the side of your lower back. For some people this is much more restful than sleeping on your stomach.

✓CREATE A BEDTIME RITUAL

Warm milk? A cup of herbal tea? These drinks are commonly recommended to aid asleep, but some people don't find them helpful. Find the routine that works for you, whatever it is. Get in the habit of sticking to the routine every night.

It could be the simple act of shutting the house down by turning off all the lights, picking up the clutter, reviewing the next day's schedule, and planning breakfast. Feeling organized about the house may help you feel less anxious. This simple routine tells your body that it's time to close down for the day. Find what helps you feel less anxious at the end of the day and own your nightly ritual.

✓REDUCE STRESS

At some points in our lives, we are burdened by a great deal of stress. It may be chronic pain, a family or work situation, financial stress, or all of these combined. Many believe that they just need relaxation to reduce stress. However, the opposite of stress is not relaxation, it's empowerment.

So do what you can to empower yourself. Daily meditation may be the answer. It forces your mind to focus on something, thereby freeing up all the clutter to float to the surface, be recognized, and be gone. For others it is guided imagery, either with the help of a professional or with CDs, regular massage, yoga or tai chi, calming music, or a therapeutic run or bike ride to get powerful endorphins flowing. Some turn to self education to manage their source of stress with more knowledge. Ask your chiropractor for suggestions that may work for you.

We all have different preferences. Try one that sounds appealing, and if you find it difficult to stick with, then try a different one.

For more information about sleep and insomnia, visit <http://www.spine-health.com/wellness/sleep>

Talk to Dr. Chapman about specific questions related to your unique health situation.

Contact Dr. Chapman
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