

Winding Down for Bedtime



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The hustle and bustle of the day has ended. You try and wind down for bed, but instead of wandering off into dreamland, you're wide awake staring at the ceiling. Insomnia sufferers know this feeling all too well.

Insomnia

Insomnia is the absence of sleep and abnormal wakefulness. Causes of insomnia can range from taking too many stimulants (such as caffeine), stress, chronic disease, certain medications, personal problems and more. Below are some tips to help you fall asleep faster.

Tip #1: If you cannot fall asleep, get out of bed and do something else until you feel the urge to sleep. Nothing is more infuriating than lying in bed and being unable to fall asleep. If you can't fall asleep, it is best to get up, walk around a little and then return to bed. Lying in bed and being unable to sleep will just increase your frustration and further aggravate your insomnia.

Tip #2: Napping

Napping, when its timing and duration are designed properly, has the potential to improve our daily lives. Laboratory findings indicate that scheduled napping promotes waking function, alertness and performance under conditions of sleep deprivation. Ideally, naps should be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes and should not occur after 5 pm.

Tip #3: Avoid caffeine, nicotine, alcohol and other stimulants

Stimulants, such as caffeine and nicotine, tend to promote wakefulness rather than sleep. In the case of caffeine, the stimulant effect can last up to 24 hours. At first, alcohol has a mild sedative effect, but later on, it may act as more of a stimulant. If you choose to use stimulants such as caffeine and tobacco, try to avoid these in the evening so their stimulating effects wear off by bedtime.

Tip #4: Exercise

Regular exercise promotes better sleep quality and duration. Avoid exercising immediately before bedtime as it can be stimulating.

Tip #5: Eat healthy, particularly close to bedtime

Avoid eating too close to bedtime as having a full stomach can trigger the digestive system and lead to wakefulness. Also avoid refined carbohydrates and sugar before bedtime as these may throw off your hormonal balance and cause you to feel alert.

Tip #6: Try a calming herbal formula

A calming herbal formula can be very effective in the treatment of insomnia. Herbs such as valerian, passion flower, hops and skullcap have been shown to have sedative properties without the side effect of drowsiness. Studies have shown that valerian is effective in treating people with mild to moderate insomnia. Valerian is believed to make sleep more restful and make the transition to sleep easier. Passionflower has been shown to reduce anxiety. Hops and skullcap have been shown to have mild sedative properties.