

GETTING A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP

FIRST OF ALL - SLEEP HYGIENE

Insomnia occurs for all sorts of reasons. Here are many suggestions of what could be going wrong for you. Hopefully you only need to change one or two things.

1. **Dinner should be a light meal** and eaten relatively early, around 5-7pm. Try not to eat large serves of protein. If you are in the habit of eating meat or other heavy foods, try to have this main meal at lunchtime rather than dinner. See below the list of foods that influence sleep.
2. Take a short stroll after dinner to promote digestion and relaxation.
3. Dehydration is a very common cause of insomnia. **Drink plenty of water during the day** (at least 2-3litres), and add a slice of lemon or ginger to the water. You will get an added benefit by sipping hot water during the day.
4. **Avoid stimulants** such as caffeine and nicotine, and depressants such as alcohol.
5. Avoid dynamic focused activities in the evening. Eg action packed movies, computer work. **Turn off the TV at 9pm at the latest.** Substitute with light reading. Play relaxing music.
6. **Take care of Unfinished Business.** Before you get ready for bed write a list of what you must remember to do the following day. Your subconscious will be able to relax.
7. Specific **yoga exercises** promote restfulness. For example any of the forward bends. Sit on your knees, and then stretch your hands forward on the floor. Breathe deeply and stay in the pose for 5 minutes.
8. Drink **relaxing herbal teas** containing some or all of the following - chamomile, limeflowers, valerian, passionflower, and hawthorn berries. Brew for at least 5 minutes.
9. **Epsom salt bath.** 1-2 cups of Epsom salts and a few drops of the essential oil of Lavender or Marjoram. Epsom salts contains magnesium – a very relaxing mineral. Soak for 10-15 minutes and feel your muscles let go. (Buy Epsom salts in bulk from your Health Food Shop. Much cheaper!)
10. Use an **Aromatherapy** vaporiser in your bedroom. Lavender and Marjoram and German Chamomile are very relaxing and sedating.
11. Keep your bedroom neat and clean. Use peace-promoting colours in your decoration or linen. **Green and blue** are particularly restful colours.
12. Begin to **prepare for bed 30minutes before you intend to get into bed.**
13. **Get into bed before 10.00pm.** This time is when the body is naturally relaxed and a bit dull, making it easier to relax into sleep. Sleep becomes lighter as the night progresses so if you choose to stay up late, your sleep will be shallower and less rejuvenating, and it will be more difficult to get to sleep.
14. It takes 15-20 minutes to fall asleep. **Try not to worry about falling asleep.** Your body will still benefit from quiet rest, even if you are not in deep sleep. Listen to a **guided meditation tape** to deepen your relaxation.
15. **Wake up before 7am** – use an alarm clock if necessary. Get up even if you still feel tired, regardless of how good a sleep you had.

FOODS THAT HELP YOU RELAX	WAKE-UP FOODS
<p>Dairy – in particular warm milk that has been boiled. Oils. Rice and wheat. Oranges, bananas, avocado, grapes, cherries, peaches, melons, berries, plums, pineapples, mango, papaya. Beetroot, cucumber, carrots, asparagus, sweet potato. Nuts. Chicken, turkey and seafood. Cardamom, cumin, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, mustard seed, small amounts of black pepper.</p>	<p>Concentrated sugar, chocolate and lollies. Barley, corn, millet, buckwheat, rye and oats. MSG. Apples, pears, sprouts and cabbage. Beans (legumes). Beef and too much protein. Some people will be restless with salicylate containing foods like tomato, eggplant, and capsicum.</p> <p>Foods that are too salty cause dehydration and should be avoided.</p>

EXTRA HELP FOR INSOMNIA:

The principals of good Sleep Hygiene is vital for improving your quality of sleep. However if you suffer from insomnia you will need extra help from herbs or supplements to re-establish good sleep patterns. The following suggestions are all helpful in promoting restful sleep.

Spinal misalignment: If your neck or upper back is out of alignment you may suffer insomnia. See a chiropractor or osteopath for an assessment.

Relaxing essential oils include Chamomile, Lavender, and the most sedative oil of all – Marjoram. *Sunspirit* make *Dreamtime Blend* – add 10 drops to 20ml massage oil. Massage into your feet, add 8 drops to an oil burner, and/or place a drop on your pillow.

Flower Essences

Magnesium supplementation

Vitamin B complex supplements every morning.

Herbal restoratives to re-balance Adrenal overdrive:

Herbal Relaxants (Humulus compound, ReDormin)

Adenosine the natural sleep molecule of the brain

Eliminating Impurities

Rehydrate yourself – sip very hot water every 30 minutes for a week.

Sleep apnoea and snoring.

Finally – a bit of philosophy

Sleep time is the only time our subconscious mind gets to really communicate with the conscious, more active side of our being. If sleep is being blocked, the answer may not just be in the physical. Ask yourself "Is there anything about my life that I am not happy about?" "What makes me happy?" "How can I find fulfillment in my life?"

Sweet Dreams!

Lauren Cunio, Wholistic Encounters Natural Therapies Ph: 4464 1060