

Common Sleep Problems

Because of our hectic lifestyles many of us experience difficulty sleeping at some stage during our lives. The following represents some of the more typical sleeping problems that people experience.

- **Sleep Onset Insomnia** (Trouble falling asleep)
- **Sleep Maintenance Insomnia** (Waking frequently during the night)
- **Early morning waking** (Waking up and not being able to get back to sleep)
- **Medication Dependence Insomnia** (Trouble sleeping well without medication)
- **Non-restorative Sleep** (Waking up not refreshed- sometimes associated with sleep Apnea)
- **Delayed Sleep Phase Syndrome** (Trouble falling asleep, then trouble getting up in the morning)
- **Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome** (Falling asleep early in the evening, then waking in the early hours of the morning and not going back to sleep)
- **Pain Related Insomnia** (Trouble sleeping well because of chronic pain)
- **Habit Insomnia** (Started sleeping badly for some reason and the reason has passed but the bad sleep continues as a habit)
- **Worry Insomnia** (Worrying in bed)

Suggestions for Sleeping with Confidence

On average, you should aim to get 7-8 hours sleep a night. The following sleep rules are designed to help you develop good sleeping habits.

- **No work or thinking about work in the last 1-2 hours before bed.**
Developing a bedtime routine cues the brain for sleep. This could include, spending time with the family watching non stimulating TV, reading non stimulating material, getting ready for the next day, showering, brushing teeth etc. Avoid vigorous exercise late at night.
- **Do not use the bed for anything except sleeping** (and sex).
The only exception to this is reading as long as it puts you to sleep and not wake you up. Listening to a relaxation CD can be very helpful while lying in bed waiting to sleep. Try to make your bedroom, quiet dim and cool. Avoid too many blankets or electric blankets. If you are too hot it is difficult to sleep.
- **Try to go to bed at a set time each night.** If you are not tired then go to bed later, only when you are actually sleepy (e.g. 11pm +) Learn to 'catch the wave of sleepiness'. In most people this wave comes in 90 minute cycles.
- **Learn to reduce thinking and worrying in bed.**
Thought stopping and thought switching are useful techniques for relaxing your mind. When unhelpful thoughts come while you are trying to sleep simply say... "*Stop it, I'm not going to think about this now, I'll deal with this tomorrow, now is the time for sleep*" Thought stopping should be followed by thought switching which involving thinking about a pleasant memory, holiday or conversation. If you tend to worry about things at night, put aside time during the day for problem solving.
- **If you do not fall asleep within 30 minutes after turning out the lights.**
Get up, go to another room, and do something that is not too arousing until you are ready to settle back to sleep. If you do get up, avoid bright lights as they can communicate to the brain that it is time to get up!
- **Learn not to worry (or get frustrated) if you are not sleeping.**
Resting peacefully is almost as restorative as sleep!
- **20 minutes of relaxation** during the day will help reduce overall tension and will make it easier to fall asleep at night.
- **Cut out all naps during the day** or falling asleep in front of the TV at night.
- **Do not catch up on sleep.** Get up at the same time each morning [i.e. 6-8am] regardless of how much sleep you got the night before. On weekends get up no more than 1 hour later than you would on week days.

Suggestions for Sleeping with Confidence contd

- **If you can, go for a walk in the morning.** Morning light helps wake us up, resets our body clock and helps us fall asleep at night.
- **Watch your caffeine intake**
By avoiding coffee, tea, chocolate, energy drinks from late afternoon onwards you give yourself the best chance to fall asleep at bed time. Too much alcohol at night will help you fall asleep but will usually wake you up during the night and produce lighter and less refreshing sleep.

My Sleep Goal

During the week

My Bed Time: _____

My final wake time

During the weekend

My Bed Time: _____

My final wake time