

When addressing your own insomnia, start on a Friday or when you have 2 or 3 days off from early commitments, and consider all of the following to develop a sufficiently comprehensive and self-managed treatment.

#### During the day:

1. Exercise at least every other day and at least 4 hours before you go to bed; exercise helps people sleep well.
2. Avoid all caffeinated beverages after 4:00 pm.
3. Try to avoid napping. If you feel compelled to nap, set a watch or phone alarm to go off 20 minutes after you “settled in” for your nap. Put yourself to bed 30 min later at night for each 20 min nap that you took.
4. Avoid completing schoolwork, watching television, using your laptop or other electronics, and engaging in phone conversations in bed during the day. It is best to reserve your bed for sleeping to the greatest extent possible.

#### The hour prior to putting yourself in bed:

5. Have a snack at night that is high in complex carbohydrates and protein, and avoid foods with a high glycemic indexes as part of your nighttime snack. Also, avoid chocolate because it contains caffeine.
6. Eliminate all medication prescribed to improve sleep. The medications interfere with the learning that is required for you to be an effective sleeper and often allow only for low quality sleep (e.g., less than optimal REM sleep). If you feel compelled to use a pill to help you sleep, consider 1.5 to 4 mg of melatonin taken 30 to 45 min prior to going to bed while the ambient lighting is reduced.
7. To minimize the mental rumination that often occurs when people go to bed, consider writing down your reflections of the day and plans for tomorrow before or during your nighttime routine. Even just spending a few moments thinking about your day and planning for tomorrow (e.g., when you brush your teeth), is a good habit. Do not reflect and plan with your phone or laptop unless it is 30 min removed from when you put yourself in bed.
8. Establish a nighttime routine that involves dimming of the ambient lighting, decreased reliance on screen time, cooler ambient temperature, and a consistent pattern of actions during the 15 to 30 min prior to going to bed (e.g., reflect on your day, plan for tomorrow, change into pajamas, brush teeth, read a book in a chair, turn on your sound machine, lay down in bed).

#### When to go to and get out of bed:

9. To enhance the value of sleep at the start of sleep treatment, put yourself to bed one hour later than when you fell asleep the night before. If you fall asleep quickly (within 15 min) on the first and subsequent nights, put yourself to bed 15 to 30 min earlier the next night until you are going to bed at a time that allows you 7.5 to 8 hours of sleep before your alarm goes off. Try not to stay in bed for more than 8.5 hours each 24 hour period.

#### Considerations while in bed:

10. Optimize sleep dependencies (those events that without which you cannot fall asleep) by making sure they are present throughout the entire night, do not require any resetting during the night, and are transportable (e.g., consider a white noise machine on continuously while you are in bed). Avoid falling asleep outside of your bed (e.g., on the couch) or with a radio or television on that automatically shuts off during the night.
11. Optimize your sleep context by making it dark (consider room darkening curtains) and relatively cool, by masking ambient noise that may alert or awake you by using a white noise machine on at conversational volume, and by removing any objects that may encourage behavior that is incompatible with sleeping (e.g., remove cell phones, all other electronic gadgets including an alarm clock, textbooks from sight).
12. To address long delays to sleep onset and awakening during the night, consider the following: Get out of bed if you are not asleep within 10-15 min, sit in chair and read a literary classic under low light for 15-30 min or until drowsy, then return to bed. In other words, if you are not sleeping for 15 min at the beginning of the night or in the middle of the night, *get out of bed* (i.e., do not practice not sleeping in bed, because you will then get good at it). When you get out of bed, read a book, but do not do anything that is highly reinforcing, completes a goal, or involves electronic screens (i.e., do not do the laundry, clean the house, check email, make a snack, surf the web, watch TV, complete an assignment, email, tweet, instant message, blog or check emails, tweets, IMs, or blogs).
13. To address difficulty getting out of bed in the morning, consider the *Sleep Cycle* application available on smart phones. Relying on the accelerometer in smart phones, the application allows for your phone-based alarm to go off when you are transitioning out of sleep as opposed to going off when you are in a relatively deep stage of sleep (you set a 30-minute window for your alarm to go off). The phone is placed out of sight (by bed or under the fitted sheet).