



# SELF-CARE FOR INSOMNIA

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Insomnia is a problem for many people, and the worry about not sleeping can become a problem of its own. Occasional insomnia is common and may be a response to excitement or temporary worry. It will do you no harm as long as you remain reasonably energetic in your daily life. Also, you may not realize that you need less sleep as you get older, and may think you have insomnia when you can't get the hours you were used to getting. If you do feel over tired or too tense to relax, try the following tips.

1. Don't work in bed. If the bedroom is used for paying bills or studying, entering it can become a signal to become active rather than to go to sleep.
2. Instead of watching TV before bedtime, listen to relaxing music and practice deep breathing for 10 or 20 minutes.
3. Get some exercise every day so your body feels tired at night.
4. Try a warm bath before bed. Adding Epsom salts will increase your relaxation.
5. Make sure your bed is comfortable and that you are not too hot or too cold.
6. Avoid alcohol and caffeine in the evening.
7. Ensure your bedroom is darkened and quiet. You may want to add room darkening shades or curtains for the light or a "white noise" machine or fan to address noise issues
8. A light snack before bed helps many people, but a big meal may keep you up as your digestive system works overtime.
9. Use relaxation techniques such as slow abdominal breathing. Breathe slowly, concentrating on filling your abdomen like a balloon. Continue for up to 5 minutes at a time, but stop if you get dizzy.
10. Try some gentle floor stretches before bed. Lying down with your feet on the floor and your knees up, lower your knees from side to side. Tilt your pelvis forward and back several times. Slowly turn your head from side to side. Stretch gently and slowly anywhere you feel tight.
11. Regular massage can help relieve cumulative tension in your body, reduce blood pressure, stress, depression and anxiety, and. People often report that they sleep better after a massage.

While massage may be a useful tool in addressing your insomnia, it does not replace medical diagnosis or treatment. If you don't get results after trying the self-care presented here, consult your physician—it's possible you may be experiencing anxiety, depression, or may have other medical issues that need to be addressed. A physician can assist in determining the cause of your sleeplessness and may present additional options for your care and treatment.

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