

# How to Get a Good Night's Sleep

By Richard O'Brien

Going without sleep affects our concentration, decision making, our mood and our overall productivity. Long term sleep deprivation can also be detrimental to our well-being. Fortunately, there are a number of simple lifestyle changes you can make to ensure that insomnia doesn't leave you in a rut. Make sure you get outside in the sunlight every day, tire yourself out naturally with exercise, and don't consume caffeine before bed are just a few.

We all know the need for a good night's rest and how terrible we can feel when we don't get one. At any given time lack of sleep impacts your concentration, decision making, and general productivity. It can also influence your mood; increasing the chance that you will be the company grump. The longer you go without sleep the greater the risk that it will have an effect on your well being.

Here are some tips that apply to make certain that insomnia doesn't lead you straight in to a rut:

**Reset Your Body Clock** – It is important to maintain a regular sleep schedule. Consider going to bed at the same time each night and getting out of bed at the same time every morning. I am not suggesting that you will be able to make this happen straight away since initially you won't be tired at your desired bed time. Do it gradually and go to bed earlier and earlier every day.

Keep this pattern going over weekends whenever you can too. When you don't end up with sufficient sleep don't feel guilty about having a short nap to catch up just try not to nap too long (a quarter-hour should be sufficient) and try and do it as early in the afternoon as you can. If you can keep your schedule going long enough you might eventually wake up naturally without having to count on your noisy alarm.

**Proper Light Exposure** – Melatonin is a hormone manufactured in the brain that is in charge of regulating the natural sleep-wake cycle. The amount of Melatonin produced is governed by light exposure. Our brains should secrete more of the hormone in the evening, when it is dark, making us feel tired. Then throughout the day, when it is light, our brain should release less of the hormone making it possible for us to stay attentive.

That is why if you are at work all day long, with no exposure to natural light, you may begin to feel sleepy. Make an effort to spend some time outdoors throughout the day. Before bed steer clear of bright lights. Switch off the television and laptop and don't use backlit equipment in bed either as this will probably stimulate the mind instead of relaxing it.

**Eat Your Meals At The Right Times** – Attempt to eat dinner earlier in the evening and avoid big or tough to digest meals. Make an effort to minimize your fluid intake as well, if you don't want to be getting out of bed regularly to go to the bathroom .. What you eat is equally as relevant as how much you eat. Clearly keep away from anything with caffeine several hours before going to sleep.

Additionally, there are quite a few foods that can positively impact sleep such as chamomile tea, warm milk, and bananas.

**Wear Yourself Out Naturally** – Most of the over-the-counter sleeping medication has negative unintended effects like feeling fatigued the next day. And, after a while you will establish a dependence which would make it really hard to sleep without assistance.

How much physical exercise do you get. Most people don't get enough. Try to get a good amount of physical exercise and the earlier in the day you do it the better.

**Clear Your Head** – Tension and over-thinking were other key factors that made it extremely hard for me to get to sleep. If you are the same then you need to learn to wind down. Attempt some deep breathing or even a little bit of gentle stretching before going to sleep.

If you are an over thinker, keep a pencil and writing pad beside your bed, make a list of precisely what is on your mind and keeping you awake. By doing this you are able to take another look at it tomorrow with a clean mindset.

**Seek Help** – If all else fails, know when you should see a professional. You may have a far more serious issue that needs attention should you suffer from any one of these symptoms:

You are constantly tired.

You experience difficulty getting to sleep or remaining asleep.

You frequently wake up with a headache.

You are falling asleep when you are supposed to be awake.