

Natural Cures For Insomnia
Finally getting that much needed sleep ...

Natural Cures For Insomnia

learn the natural way to get
the sleep you need



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The image features a woman with blonde hair and a surprised expression, holding several colorful shopping bags (pink, orange, red, purple). The text is overlaid on the image in various colors and fonts.

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The image shows a group of diverse young adults in a classroom setting, all giving thumbs up. The background is a bright, modern classroom with large windows. The text and logos are overlaid on the image.

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Introduction

Physically, you are completely worn out and wish for nothing more than a good night's sleep. However, once in bed, you toss and turn, sometimes not getting a wink of sleep all night. Even when you finally think you are able to get some sleep, you awaken to find that you have been asleep for only about an hour.

You can't seem to concentrate on your work either. You are very irritable and moody. After a few nights of not being able to sleep, you seem completely withdrawn from others and are constantly depressed. Not to mention that with your lack of attention at work, your boss is probably after you as well.

Sound familiar?

If this has been happening on a regular basis, you could be suffering from insomnia.

Rest assured that having insomnia is very common. This does not mean you are weird or crazy, it simply means that you have a problem, and that you need to identify what factors are causing you to lose sleep before establishing how you can overcome them to finally get that much needed snooze.

How do you judge the severity of your insomnia? If you find yourself not being able to get that much needed few hours more than 3 times a week and this goes for more than a month, then you are suffering from chronic insomnia that you need to look into. Anything less is known as short term or acute insomnia, which can still badly affect you despite perhaps sounding less severe.

Let's get a better understanding of the definition and type of insomnia you actually have. Clinically, **two types of insomnia** have been identified. The world we live in and the stress that comes as part of it often brings on 'secondary insomnia'. This is the most common type of insomnia and based on research done by the [National Heart Lung and Blood Institute](#), it can affect as many as 8 out of 10 people.

How is secondary insomnia different from primary insomnia?

Secondary insomnia indicates that the insomnia you have is being caused by factors that are related to emotional, neurological or medical disorders that you are already having. These can include:

- Another illness or condition that you already have (most commonly related to arthritis, heart and lung conditions). Neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's can also cause secondary insomnia;

- Emotional factors such as post traumatic stress syndrome, or anxiety or depression related to incidents in your work or personal life;
- Your consumption of tobacco, alcohol or coffee. These may be wonderful to consume, especially as they probably appear unlikely to actually cause your sleep to falter, but they do;
- Medication that you are already taking for other conditions that might have an adverse side effect on your sleep or, in this case, the lack of it.

On the other hand, primary insomnia is not brought on by any single factor and is a condition in itself that lasts up to a maximum of one month. While a number of life changes such as emotional upsets, travel, or even changed sleeping habits (particularly what time you go to bed) can be related to primary insomnia, there is no fixed factor as to why primary insomnia comes and goes.

Although it may seem easier said than done, curing or improving secondary insomnia can be done given time, although this depends on how soon the causes can be determined and eventually eliminated.

There is the quick fix of going to a doctor to get medication, but this may do more to mask the condition than get rid of it.

You don't want to take pharmaceuticals anyway, do you?

You would prefer a natural cure, which is exactly what this is book is going to show you in the hope that, by doing so, it will help ensure that you get that much needed sleep!

Being sure ...

Even after reading the symptoms and causes, you are probably still not sure if insomnia is what you have. Here is a list of things that you can consider as a way of trying to confirm your condition before we actually move on to how we can cure it.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- How long has this condition existed and how frequently does it occur?
- Are you on any medication and why?
- What time do you normally go to bed? Is the timing consistent or does it vary? If it does vary, why does that variation happen?
- Do you feel well refreshed when waking up, or are you tired throughout the day?
- Do you have problems carrying out simple day to day tasks?
- What do you do before you tuck yourself in? Is there a specific routine or does this vary as well?
- What does your diet contain, especially towards the evening? Do you consume heavy dinners? Are you in a job that requires you to entertain with rich meals, alcohol and late hours?
- Do you snore and does this happen on a regular basis?
- Do you find yourself waking up midway through the night, gasping for air?
- Do you worry about falling asleep?
- Are there distractions such as traffic outside, noisy neighbors, etc that keep you from falling asleep?
- Are you anxious, depressed or easily irritable during the day, and is this as a result of or is it causing your lack of sleep?

If you find yourself nodding in agreement with more than one of the points above, then you certainly have a sleeping problem. Keep reading to make sure you get to understand your problem better, so that you can also grab a better sleep.

On the other hand, if you are not able to identify any of these points in yourself, then get your sleeping partner or a friend to help you and see what you come up with between the two of you.

Who gets insomnia?

Insomnia does not discriminate. Statistics from the [National Heart Lung and Blood Institute](#) indicate that one in three adults are occasionally susceptible to insomnia, while one in ten adults have chronic insomnia. Insomnia can occur at any age, but women appear to suffer from the condition more than men.

In general, categories of people who are more likely to suffer from insomnia include those who are under a lot of stress (be it work or personal matters), those forced to tolerate irregular working hours such as shift workers or those who work at night, and those who travel long distances frequently to places with time changes.

Why do you need sleep?

Before beginning to look at the various natural cures and treatments that you can consider using to combat your insomnia, let us examine why sleep is important in the first place.

You must be sure that you are actually getting enough sleep. As you get older, you need less sleep, but an average adult needs a solid 7 to 8 hours of sleep every day.

While some people can feel refreshed with as little as 5 to 6 hours of sleep every night, the number of sleeping hours your body actually needs also depends on what you do during the day to some extent.

If you are wondering if sleep is a necessary part of survival, it most certainly is. Resting your body also means resting your mind. Very simply put, sleep presents a chance for your body to repair itself, renewing cells and rejuvenating you.

Curing Insomnia, Naturally

While you can always opt for medical treatments, doctors and pills are known to relieve this condition for a short while only. In addition, pharmaceutical chemicals often have unpleasant side effects and it is possible that you would then need more pills to counter these side effects.

If you are looking at relieving your insomnia on a long term basis without invasive chemicals, what you need are natural treatments instead of expensive medical bills. While natural cures do come in the form of scents, herbs and alternative treatment methods, bear in the mind that the natural way also includes lifestyle changes that you should consider making.

Room Conditions

This is the first and most important 'ingredient' in the mix that ensures a good night's sleep. Many people assume that as long as there is a bed to lie down in, sleep will come. That is wrong, because what is around you also has an affect.

For one thing, study your room temperature. Are you really comfortable sleeping in its present ambient temperature? Does your room need more ventilation?

If the windows do not ventilate the bedroom adequately, you could try leaving the door open during the day or installing a ventilating fan in addition to an air conditioner or ceiling fan that you already have.

Talking about ceiling fans, make sure the one you have is not one that creaks with every turn. The creaking itself is enough to keep you awake through the night although you may not be consciously aware of it. The thing to do is remove any items that make distracting noises.

While you may not be aware of these noises during the day, they will become much more apparent at night when everything else is quiet. This includes ticking clocks or air fresheners that make noises.

In the recent past, it has become the habit of an increasing number of hard-pressed people to "get some work done" while in bed, just before shutting their eyes. If you are having sleep problems, this is just about the worst thing that you can do.

Your bedroom is meant for sleep, relaxation and renewal. Carrying the pressure of a deadline (be it in the form of a laptop or paperwork) to bed with you is going to put even more pressure on you. No matter how important the deadline is, ignore it and makes sure that you set aside some other space in your home to get your work done.

Even if you have a small studio apartment, assign a table or a workstation away from your sleeping area. If you have a desktop computer, television or a powerful stereo in your bedroom, have these removed. A stereo can be kept in your room if you are using it to play soft, soothing music that will induce your sleep, but anything else is an interruption you do not need.

How bright is bright? When it comes to a bedroom, the less light there is, the better it will allow you to rest. If you have windows that have street light streaming in, opt for thick curtains that will shut light out.

This also applies if you work the night shift and need your sleep during the day, because room darkening curtains that will keep the sunlight out of your room are needed. You can also get an eye mask that helps keep the light out. There are various kinds including those that come with eye gel or aromatherapy oils which also help to soothe your tired eyes, giving you a better chance of sleep.

Thinking about the 'brightness' of your room also includes making sure you have the right color of paint on your bedroom walls. You should also note the colors of your sheets. While bright colors might represent the passionate personality that you know you have, think again when picking bright, bold colors for your bedroom. Soothing tones of cream, vanilla, baby shades or plain white exude calmness which will help a great deal in getting some much needed sleep.

Also known as **Chromatherapy**, the notion of careful color selection is based on the idea that the seven rainbow colors have healing energies that ensure you retain optimal health. Believe it or not, selecting the right colors can make a big difference to your sleep. Below is a list of the colors and the feelings they can induce, as described in an ancient system of Indian medicine, Ayurveda. Decide what suits your personality and how you can introduce it to your sleeping area:

- **Violet** can enlighten you while providing you with spiritual awakening. It is also known to soothe and relax your muscles while calming your nervous system.
- **Indigo** sedates and calms you while giving you a sense of intuition. Incidentally, it helps to control bleeding.
- **Blue** induces communication and knowledge while eliminating toxins which can in turn promote better liver functions.
- **Green** is associated with having balance. Ayurvedic practitioners use green to treat bacterial functions as well.

- **Yellow** is often associated with wisdom and clarity. It also provides properties that stimulate the digestive and lymphatic systems.
- **Orange** can induce pleasure, sexual stimulation and enthusiasm. Traditionally, it is believed that it eases the digestive system.
- **Red** exudes energy and passion. In some cases, it is believed (although not medically proven) that it can improve circulation while stimulating red blood cell production as well.

Viewed from the opposite perspective, some people have trouble sleeping in a completely pitch dark room. It makes them feel disoriented. Opt for a small light to be switched on. If you have a connecting bathroom, leave the light on or get a night light. The soft light will not affect your sleep, unlike a regular fluorescent light that can keep you awake more than you should be.

Now that you have considered what to do inside your room, let's take a look outside to consider what external factors might be disturbing you.

Is your bedroom located within hearing distance of a road with heavy traffic? Perhaps you have noisy neighbors who wake up earlier than you and become a distraction?

There is a simple way of getting around noise that you cannot control. Go to your nearest pharmacy and purchase ear plugs. There are several kinds available and they are very reasonably priced. Some may seem a little uncomfortable at first but you can keep trying out a few until you find those that are a comfortable fit.

Routine, Routine, Routine!

If you look back at your childhood days, one of the reasons why you generally slept so well is because you had a fixed routine. There was meal time, play time and sleep time. As a grown adult, you need fewer sleeping hours than in your childhood days, but the sense of routine must still be there.

Look at your daily schedule - that will probably revolve around traveling to and from work, work itself, your meal times etc.

Try to fix the same time for waking up and going to bed every day. This will help your body to automatically adjust to a proper sleeping schedule and you will find it easier to get some sleep after sticking to this routine for some days. Ideally, try to be in bed by 10pm at the latest. This should easily give you, your body and your mind the 8 hours rest that is needed.

The routine does not have to be rigid. There will be some late nights and Sunday mornings or off days when you can have a no alarm day

and just rest a little longer, but you MUST establish a fixed routine that you stick to most of the time if you really want your insomnia to be relieved.

A routine for meal times will also help your body rest and to get into a sleeping mode.

Consume a medium to heavy breakfast, a middle sized lunch and a light dinner. Heavy dinners only stress out your digestive system and a heavy stomach will not let sleep come easy. We will go through the types of food that are best to get you sleeping a little later.

Getting Comfortable in Bed

No one will be able to help you more on this particular requirement than yourself. You have to decide on what makes you most comfortable when going to sleep, be it clothing or the size of the bed.

Sometimes, insomnia occurs when you have just moved to a new place. Look at what it is that is making you uncomfortable. Is it the size of the bed? Regardless of whether it is a single, queen or king size, it does matter if it makes you physically or mentally uncomfortable.

Feel your mattress. A mattress that is too thick or too thin can also adversely affect your sleep, so try to pick one that is comfortable for you and supports your back.

Spending a little more on a higher quality mattress will definitely provide you with the sleep that you need. If you do find that your mattress is comfortable but you still have problems sleeping then make sure to turn over your mattress at least once every couple of weeks. This ensures that the mattress does not sink in only one area. That is important because that can make it uncomfortable very quickly.

This also applies to your pillows. The saying "to each his own" also applies when choosing what your head rests on. Regardless of whether you prefer pillows that are soft, hard, filled with feather or cotton - it does not matter. Pick one that you like.

Ideally, try to sleep using just one pillow – two is likely to be too high and could hurt your neck – and then perhaps supplement that with throw cushions or a bolster to hold on to if necessary. But do make sure your bed does not become so cluttered that you begin to feel cramped in the very space that is supposed to make you relax.

The material and thickness of your sheets and blanket also plays a role in ensuring better sleep patterns.

If you have an air-conditioned room, make sure your sheets are not too thin. The last thing you need is to wake up in the middle of the night grabbing for more cover and warmth.

On the other hand, if you have a ceiling fan and live in area where weather conditions differ, then use thin sheets (preferably cotton) for your bed sheet and keep a thin blanket for a hot day and a thick one for a cold day. Remember, blanket or no blanket, you must always sleep in a temperature that you are comfortable with.

Once you have your bed settled, your choice of sleeping attire matters too. Sleeping attire differs from individual to individual but the general rule of staying as comfortable as possible still applies.

Go for clothing that is loose and comfortable. As appealing as some sexier night attire might seem, clothing that is tight and restrictive will not do a thing to help you get that much needed good night's rest.

Exercising Your Way To Sleep

Irrespective of who you are, what you do, or even whether you suffer from insomnia or not, the amount of physical activity you get during the day has a definite bearing on how well you sleep at night.

If exercise is not yet included in your daily routine, then now is probably a good time to start including it, because giving your body a chance to enjoy some physical activity on a regular basis assists you with the sleep routine you are trying to get yourself into. Exercising also increases alertness and raises your ambient body temperature.

Ideally, you should exercise at least 3 times a week for around 20 to 30 minutes per session.

It doesn't matter what specific activities you choose as long as you are able to increase your heart rate and strengthen your lung capacity with whatever you are doing. You might, for example, decide to do something aerobic (which will also increase the amount of oxygen being transferred into your blood) - running, biking, brisk walking, using a treadmill, dancing or a jumping rope.

While you may find it convenient to exercise after work, you must remember that you should never exercise less than 3 to 4 hours before bedtime. Exercise stimulates you and this will disrupt your sleep. This means that although you are exercising on a regular basis, fatigue will still set in as you are not able to sleep well.

Exercise does not necessarily include a gym membership or a home gym. Sometimes the simplest of activities can give you the exercise you need, such as taking the stairs instead of elevator, parking your car a little further from your work place so you have to walk or even cleaning out your house instead of hiring a maid.

If you are one of those unfortunate people whose existing back problems or muscle related issues make vigorous exercising difficult, then don't take on too much. Opt for non vigorous activities such as yoga, meditation or even traditional methods of exercise such as tai chi.

Yoga is a good option, because it is based on the concept of using controlled breathing techniques and the yogic postures increase blood circulation while stimulating the nervous system, all of which can be a big boost for your efforts to sleep better.

Perhaps the best thing about yoga is that you can practice it in the privacy of your own home with the only requirement being a mat. There really is no need for expensive equipment for yoga, but it is without a

doubt a form of exercise that is tremendous for helping you sleep entirely naturally!

Some general tips for yoga include ...

- Yoga should ideally be practiced for at least 45 minutes a day, 3 to 4 hours after a meal in a clean and quiet area.
- Never hurry your yoga practice. As it involves 'bending' your body into various postures, sudden movements can sometimes cause unnecessary injuries and unwanted results.
- Have a hot shower first as this helps to encourage blood circulation, making it far less likely that you will strain yourself when practicing.

The inability to relax is probably one of the main factors that is causing your insomnia.

To counteract this, try meditating for at least 15 minutes every day, close to your bedtime. Meditation allows you to literally de-stress yourself by pushing out thoughts that are related to what happened today, what might happen tomorrow and any other worries you may have as well.

There are several techniques that can be applied to ensure that you are able to meditate successfully but it is probably best if you get some help and tuition at the beginning, so take a look around your local neighborhood to see if anyone is giving classes.

Otherwise, look for online resources, because the net is a great source of information that will help you to learn about this terrific method of relaxation.

You do not even need to sit cross legged on the floor to make this work. Sitting on a chair, you can still meditate in a way that will ease the stress out of your body, mind and soul.

However, it will help if you have a quiet area to meditate in. Don't forget to keep your breathing slow and rhythmical as well, if you want meditation to give you maximum relaxation.

Another gentle exercise method that has existed for centuries is Tai Chi. Developed by ancient Chinese monks, this involves controlled breathing while moving in slow, precise movements. Somewhere in your locality there will be Tai Chi classes, as this has become a very common way to relax. If not, you can always look up this method on the internet.

Tuneful Sleep

I suggested you should not keep a stereo set in your room unless you are using this for soft soothing music. I will now focus on what kind of music will help to drift your mind into peace, allowing you to sleep.

While music preferences vary from person to person, the best kind of music to bring you the inner peace that you need to rest are classic pieces from composers such as Strauss, Beethoven, Vivaldi and Mozart.

If you think that classical is not quite your thing then you can choose other genres like love songs, ballads, instrumentals etc. However, whatever type of tunes you choose, keep it calm and restful. Sleep is what you need, so the last thing you need is toe-tappers that are stimulating enough for you to dance to.

Another option of going to sleep with tunes in the background would be the use of specialized sound effects that help induce sleep. You can purchase these online (try [here](#)) or from your local music store. These contain soothing natural sound effects that can relax you that come in the form of running waterfalls, birds chirping, forest sounds, waves beating on the shoreline or even aquatic humming.

Sleeping Partners

Now that we have considered your bedroom, your attire and even the music you choose, there is another highly important factor that can be ruining your sleep. Regardless of whether you are sharing a bed with someone or if you have housemates, other people can adversely affect your sleep patterns.

If the people you are with are noisy, distracting or tend to have irregular sleeping habits, this can affect you.

For example, even though you make it a point to get into bed early, a partner that gets back in the small hours of the morning before running the shower and then finally getting into bed is bound to disrupt your sleep more than you realize.

While this factor may be a little more sensitive than the others discussed, you nevertheless have to handle this problem by at least talking to the person involved. Tell them you have problems sleeping, that you need your sleep to function properly and ask whether they would mind trying to be a little quieter.

However, even if they agree to be more considerate, it is not likely to last long, so consider this to be a temporary 'truce' and seek alternative sleeping arrangements. This might mean you need to sleep in separate rooms or you might even move to a completely different part of the building where you know their activities will not intrude your sleep.

Sleeping Scents

Continuing with the theme of making the place you stay conducive to sleep, you will of course need to keep your room clean – it is a must if you are looking forward to a restful night.

In the first instance, removing clutter is very important, but you should also look at keeping your room dust free and smelling fresh. Sheets must be changed at least once a week (at least – more is better!) and this includes other bedding items like blankets and towels.

In some older houses, even though a fresh coat of paint has been applied, a faint musty smell will still be there. Go for air fresheners or scent bags that you can place around your room. Scents like chamomile and lavender exude calmness, which can help you get to sleep.

Scents of many different types can help you sleep more soundly. Below is a list of various scents that you can use alongside the healing properties they are said to contain.

- Chamomile (which is the most popular) has been used for a long time as a natural remedy for encouraging better sleep. As chamomile also comes in the form of tea leaves, you can place the leaves in a sachet under your pillow to ensure the scent stays within your sleeping area throughout the night.
- Lavender has similar characteristics to chamomile and is also said to relax the muscles and the central nervous system. This produces a calming effect.
- Valerian Root was very popular even in the 16th Century for treating headaches, nervousness and heart problems. In recent years, it has also been used to treat anxiety. Unlike chamomile or lavender which gives you almost instant results in improving your sleep quality, Valerian Root needs to be used on a regular basis to induce better sleep.
- Kava most commonly comes in the form of tea leaves, pills or spray. It is known to produce a numbing effect on the tongue which eventually leads to a calming and relaxing sensation throughout the body.

Alternatively, using the scents listed above as a general guide, burn aromatherapy oils in your room an hour or so before you go to bed. This way, you can blow out the candle before turning in and the smell itself will not be so strong or suffocating that you are unable to sleep.

There are likely be shops in your locality that can supply the necessary aromatherapy oils and/or candles. If you find oil burners exude too

strong a smell, you can choose incense sticks, which give off less smell but keep your room 'smelling' of calmness.

Be Careful What You Consume

While it might seem easier to fix the external things that surround you, another lifestyle change that could be required is paying more attention to what goes inside you.

Establishing a routine of the times at which meals are consumed is one factor. However, what you actually consume during these meals is also important in making sure that you get the sleep you need. It may be a little hard to follow these rules religiously, but restful sleep is definitely more important than a few indulgences.

Most people look forward to a caffeine boost in the morning.

Caffeine appears necessary in the morning because it is known to be a stimulant that increases your heart rate, thus leading to an awakening of body and mind. Having caffeine nearer to your bedtime means that, even though your body is tired, it becomes confused between the sleep it needs and the stimulating feeling that caffeine can bring.

Coffee may be your favorite beverage, but if you are serious about relieving your insomnia, you should stay away from heavy food and caffeine-laden beverages such as coffee, soda drinks (which also contain very high amounts of sugar that can produce similar effects to caffeine), chocolate bars or drinks and non-herbal teas.

Yes, even that night time cup of tea contains caffeine. In fact, it contains even more caffeine than coffee does. The only difference is that the effects of coffee appear to kick in faster.

Even if you feel that you must have these beverages through the day, make it a point not to consume any for at least 2 to 3 hours before bedtime. If at all possible, it is best to try to eliminate them from your evening diet completely.

There's a common belief that alcohol can help you in getting to sleep a little faster.

Well, a shot of whisky or bourbon can result in getting you drowsy and you will drift off a lot faster. However, your key aim here is to try and sleep well for the whole night, and in an alcohol induced sleep you will not do this.

It will make you a light sleeper, and you will find yourself waking up to small sounds and movements. Not only will this make you more tired, but you will now have a hangover to deal with.

While we all know smoking is bad for your health in general, it is even worse when you smoke a cigarette just before you sleep.

As the nicotine in your body decreases during the early period of sleep, your body will wake craving more nicotine. As a result, in a similar way to how alcohol affects you, you will not be able to sleep through the night. While quitting smoking is best for your overall health, if you really do need a cigarette, make sure that it is completely eliminated from your evening routine. Where possible, make your sleeping room smoke free.

When it comes to your diet in general, there is nothing better than a well balanced meal that will also benefit your overall health, but meals have to be of the right size at the right time too. As mentioned earlier, the best of getting the balance right is with a heavier breakfast, a medium sized lunch and a light dinner.

Heavy dinners and even spicy meals will stress and disrupt your digestive system and a heavy stomach will not let sleep come easy.

There are various special insomnia [diet plans](#) you can follow (search Google for 'insomnia diets' for more) or if you are already on a particular diet plan, see how you can work the elements of your current plan towards improving your sleep patterns. Fresh fruits, vegetables and LOTS of water (at least 8 glasses a day) are a must to include in your diet plan. Water alongside fresh fruits and vegetable is also a splendid assistant in flushing out the toxins from your body and supporting your kidneys.

You can also opt for complex carbohydrates and proteins which are low in fat. Because our bodies are all different, you need to select a diet plan that works for you. Even if you are attempting to lose weight, don't starve yourself and go without carbohydrates or proteins as this is going to tire you out in addition to exacerbating your sleeping problem.

You must limit your last meal to being at least 4 hours before bedtime. However, if you feel the need for night cap, stay away from high protein meals and food or beverages that contain high sugar and fat. Opt for cereal or yogurt that will fill your stomach without giving you a heavy feeling when sleeping. Although water is generally great for you, don't drink too much within an hour of your bedtime or you'll find yourself waking up to go to the bathroom all night.

The same applies during the day when you need to snack between meals. Opt for healthy snacks in the form of fresh fruits, fresh juices or even cereal bars. This is plenty to nourish you and keep you going, without stressing out your digestive system with unnecessary fats and oils.

Shower Time

If your home comes equipped with a long bath, try indulging in a soaking hot bath at least once a week immersed in water scented with a particular fragrance that you like. Bath time is the most private time of your day, so use it to relax and push away your anxiety as the same time. Put your mobile on silent if you must. Drown out the rest of the world with music from your favorite CD. Finding an appropriate scented oil, candle or bath gel with a soothing scent will assist in making sure you are able to calm down.

Herbs and scents that work wonders in calming you down include chamomile, lavender, lime flower, mint, passion flower, hops, neroli, rose, vetiver and ylang-ylang.

More importantly, if you don't have the time to indulge in a long soak in the tub or if you just don't have a tub at all, make sure that you take at least two hot showers a day. One before you start your day as this will freshen you and another shower when you get back, at least 2 hours before bedtime if possible.

Your body (this includes your feet) must be clean when getting into bed. It will not help you sleep if whatever dirt, grime and germs you have gathered on your body through the day are carried with you into bed giving you a horribly sticky feeling. This in turn will give you itches that are bound to keep you awake through the night instead of relieving your insomnia.

Pushing Away Worries and Fears

Sometimes, when you already know you have insomnia, this fact itself will worry you even more and sleep won't come easy. Don't keep looking at the clock wondering what time you will fall asleep. This will only make it worse.

Being anxious about when you sleep will only increase your insomnia. Work on the other factors for reducing insomnia and let sleep come to you. The calmer you are when trying to drift off to sleep, the more restful your sleep becomes.

If you are still trying to figure out if worrying before sleep is a problem or not, make an observation every night. What do you actually think about before you go to sleep? Does your mind drift towards personal problems, work issues, financial issues etc?

Keep a little notebook by your side and write these down. Worrying about these issues on a daily basis is not going to improve the situation. If anything, worrying about one matter after another is going to give you less sleep and in turn less energy to deal with them the next day.

Watching TV just before you sleep is not going to help either.

Thought provoking documentaries or action and horror movies are going to put ideas you into your mind, about things that are not even connected to you.

Scary or action movies can even cause nightmares, meaning you would be waking up every few minutes.

Feng Shui

The literal translation from Chinese of this phrase would tell you that it means “wind-water”. While newer followers might claim that Feng Shui is a practice of arranging objects (such as furniture) to assist an individual in finding a better balance in life, the practice was originally derived from Chinese culture in relation to the idea of providing appropriate selection of land to build a home and to select burial plots.

These days, Feng Shui has become more common and widely known. However, not everyone looks at this as an ideal alternative in solving problems. Some people consider this practice to be associated with black magic.

On the other hand, if you are open to try different things, even though they may seem a little unconventional, give this a go.

What you would need is a Feng Shui guide who can come to your house and visit each space within it. He or she will then guide you on the items that you should have (for example, mirrors, gold fish etc). They will also guide you on the placement of furniture, colors and accessories that you need to add on as well.

Specifically for your bedroom, the areas they would look into are factors such as the placement of your bed, mirrors and cupboards. If this practice is new to you then be patient, what you hear might be a little bit strange or perhaps even shocking.

If you feel uncomfortable with strangers entering your home, you can purchase loads of guide books reading materials and even DVDs online or from your local bookstore on perfecting this practice.

Bear in mind though that even by moving furniture around as per Feng Shui guidelines, this may not directly improve your sleep patterns.

Your Mode of Transport

While you may think that this has very little to do with your sleep, think again. If you travel to work be it via public transport, your own vehicle or even in a carpool with colleagues, analyze the time you leave, the approximate time you return and what kind of transport you use.

If you find that your work place is too far away and this results in your waking up very early and returning too late at night, then look at how you can work out a more convenient solution. This includes looking at the option of either moving house or switching jobs.

Should you use public transport, look at factors such as the effectiveness and reliability of getting to your work place in time and even how crowded the train, bus or subway gets.

Sometimes, even the thought of standing for an hour on a bus can be a dreary thought and this is bound to affect you when you get home.

For a start, you will probably be too tired to do anything else, which means you will either drop straight into bed, or alternatively, you constantly dread the thought of going to work and this adversely affects your sleep because you start thinking about the issue more and more.

If you are using public transport, look at the possibility of using your own vehicle or alternatively car pooling with others.

One other option would be to get yourself an MP3 player and load it with songs that you know will relax you. This would at least partially drown out the stress of using public transportation and the hubbub around you.

Regardless of your mode of transport, give yourself enough time to get from one point to another. Trying to sleep fitfully through the night and then jumping out of bed in a flurry of activity is bound to affect you.

Should you be using your own vehicle and find yourself constantly stuck in traffic jams, calm yourself down. If there are alternative routes, attempt to use them. Alternatively, play your favorite CDs in the car and focus more on the music, less on the jam. There is simply no use in getting all stressed over something you cannot control and carrying this stress home with you.

Staying Positive and Strong

We already know that you have a problem with sleeping. Making a few lifestyle changes can diminish this problem. Do not keep putting yourself down by thinking that your problem cannot be solved. You must stay positive if you really want to beat this insomnia.

Not having self confidence or having low self esteem is not going to assist in relieving your situation, and be assured that having insomnia does not make you a freak.

If you already have a therapist, they would be an excellent person to talk to. Talk to them about how having insomnia is affecting your life and those around you.

Share your concerns and your worries. See if this results in your feeling less anxious when going to sleep.

On the other hand, if meeting with a therapist makes you feel uncomfortable, trying talking to your close friends. This might help more than you think.

Even if you are not sure what it is that is keeping you from restful sleep, once you talk about it with others close to you, you may actually be able to pinpoint a single factor or some related factors that you had not really noticed or thought about before.

Putting yourself down is not going to help cure your insomnia. It will make it worse if you go to sleep every night telling yourself that you have a problem.

Thinking positive and building up your confidence is a **MUST**.

If you are going through a period of change in your life or if there have been recent losses in your family, look at ways that you can inspire yourself. Never wallow.

Disasters in your life are never easy to handle and there is only so much you can do in a day.

Every single one of us is only given 24 hours in a day in which to both rest and work. Losing sleep over things you cannot control will not give you more strength to deal with whatever your current situation is.

If you know of anyone else who is having a similar problem to yours, talk to them. Ask them how they have overcome insomnia, or how they are going about doing so.

There is no harm in learning something new for your own good.

There are online groups and even groups within your local community who can assist you in speaking up about what you have. You should not be embarrassed or shy that this problem has come into your life. The most important thing is accepting that you have a problem and looking towards a solution.

Pick up books that are inspirational, or joke books for that matter that will cheer you up. An example of reading material that is bound to heal your spirit is the 'Chicken Soup for the Soul' Series. The series contains a variety of targeted people as in Chicken Soup for the Women's Soul, Chicken Soup for the Lovers' Soul, etc.

Take your pick and see how much better it can make you feel.

Alternatively, watch your favorite movies. Meet with friends for dinner or Saturday brunches.

Whatever you do, make sure positive thinking and building your self esteem is worked into the routine of getting that restful sleep you deserve.

Occupying Free Time

To keep yourself from self-pity or landing in a state of misery, always keep yourself occupied. Set a routine for yourself. Other than the time you have allocated for sleep, make sure your time is as fully occupied as possible.

Having too much free time will probably see you lying in bed all day worrying about things you don't even have to be thinking about in the first place.

To prevent this from happening, relax by taking up a hobby or attending a workshop that you fancy. Be it a jigsaw puzzle or even handicrafts, as long as your mind is focused on things apart your insomnia, you will begin to feel better.

Start on a project, for example setting up an aquarium or a scrapbook. Then, work this into your daily routine. Every day make some progress, vary your project or make new developments to it. In the long run, not only have you relieved your insomnia, you will actually gain a new skill.

Get a friend to join in or you can even work in a group. Projects such as book readings, or visiting art galleries and museums are simple things that can actually get you focused on relaxing yourself during the day, which leads to a better sleep at night.

However, be careful about going for hobbies that provide you with so much stimulation that you cannot sleep because you are too 'revved up' from the activity. You should probably stay away from things like rock climbing, bungee jumping or high adrenaline activities, because as

much as you might like them, remember the key here is making sure you get to sleep at night.

Your Work Habits

Most of us work for other, although no doubt some people that read this are self-employed. Regardless of your situation, workloads will come and workloads will go. There will always be issues arising too, be it with management, colleagues, staff, suppliers, and so on.

Learn how to prioritize. This is a must if you don't wish to have every one of these issues running through your head as you try to get some sleep at night.

The one fact you must realize about your job is that work will always be there. You cannot tell yourself that if you work at home, in your bed, at night, you will be able to lessen your workload.

There are methods you can use to improve the work flow so it doesn't affect you to the point of not being able to sleep.

First and foremost, never procrastinate.

If a job lands on your table and it carries a deadline in weeks to come, it doesn't matter. Most importantly, get it done immediately.

Nearer to the deadline, follow up and make sure everything is in order.

One reason for doing this is that you will never know what your workload is going to be nearer the deadline time. You may have other critical tasks, and the job you have procrastinated on will just add to this load giving you more stress. Secondly, getting a job done before the deadline gives you ample time to revisit your work and make sure all is order before submission or before commencement.

Next, look at your inbox. Find ways how you can keep it uncluttered. Arrange your mail into specific folders. Sort them into items you have already done and items that need your attention today or some point after.

Looking at a massive amount of emails will make you think that you have much to do all in one go, but once you are organized, you'll find that you have more space between tasks to ensure that each one is carried out effectively.

Lastly, just as you have established a routine for other parts of your day, make sure you follow a routine at work too. Allocate a time to check and respond to emails, a time to attend to reports, meetings and other tasks. There's no use working more than your necessary working hours when this is bound to affect your sleeping pattern. This will make you so much more tired.

Just like at your home, make your work space as tidy and as comfortable as you can. You spend a large part of your day here and a cluttered environment is going to lead to you carrying this sense of clutter around you.

While this book can only serve as a guide to how you can smooth out the work flow for yourself, you should use the ideas above to create a system that works for you, one that results in you leaving work minus the excess baggage of work to complete at home.

Take A Deep Breath

No matter how overwhelming the day gets, make sure you get at least 5 minutes of 'you' time at intervals. Take a deep breath and literally think of nothing. Even if something big happens that requires your immediate attention, take a deep breath before you respond.

A very simple breathing exercise would work as follows:

- Sit comfortably in a chair;
- Close your eyes and take a very deep breath;
- Exhale slowly;
- Keep repeating this a few times until you can literally find the tension oozing out of your body.

Whether you are at work or at home, you can try this wherever you are. The main aim of doing this is to ensure your tension doesn't build up until you get home, which is going to disturb your sleep again.

If it helps, you can also limit what is discussed in your sleeping area.

For instance, you could set a rule that serious conversations or work related topics are to be kept outside your sleeping area. This will help ensuring a peaceful ambience within your sleeping space.

Spa Treats

Another way of ensuring that the stress is released from your body would be to go to a spa on a regular basis. While some treatments can be expensive which might make it a pricey way of banishing the stress that affects your insomnia, you need not necessarily pick only massage treatments. Select a regular spa with a peaceful ambience and then you can choose treatments like manicure, pedicure, foot wash or something as simple as a hand and foot massage.

Make it a point to spend at least one to two hours a week to relax in some way like this, be it through a massage or alternative treatment. Even if you were to sit in the garden area of the spa, sipping chamomile tea, you would be surprised at how relaxed you feel.

Get yourself a specific masseur so that you can relate the particular stress points on your body to them. He can then work on telling you what to do or what treatments you require.

A rule about spas is that to ensure you feel its full relaxation benefits, you must make sure you are punctual for your appointments. If you are going to be rushing in all of a fluster, it defeats the purpose of going there to feel relaxed in the first place. Always arrive at least 20 minutes prior to your appointment. This gives you a chance to get ready for your treatment while allowing you to relax in its ambience.

Spas will also sometimes provide you with little 'home-kits' that you can apply late before bed. This will enable you experiment with some treatments that you can practice within your own time and space, renewing and rejuvenating you even at home, giving you chances of better sleep at night.

Acupuncture

Even without studying Chinese culture or ancient Eastern medicine, you will have come across the term Yin and Yang. What does it actually mean and how can it affect your sleep pattern?

Yin is known to symbolize female characteristics which include being passive, dark, cold and wet. Yang is thought to symbolize male characteristics which include being active, light, warm and dry.

The proper balance of these two elements inside your body ensures the well-being of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual elements inside you. When Yin and Yang become unbalanced, it is believed that the pathways of your body (as in where the blood flows) within your internal system have become blocked causing you to be stressed or unhealthy.

This is where the practice of acupuncture comes in. To enable these blockages to be relieved or removed, needles are inserted through various points on the skin which can be determined by an acupuncture practitioner.

These needles vary in length, thickness and come with a variety of differently shaped heads. While it may seem scary to have needles inserted into your body, there is absolutely nothing to be concerned about.

Based on the different angles, rotation and vibration of these needles, your blockages can be significantly and quickly reduced or even removed entirely. Most people who have already undergone acupuncture insist that no pain (or very little) is involved. On the other hand, the chances of feeling renewed and relaxed are very high through acupuncture, so it is well worth considering.

Should you find the concept a little too hard to swallow, talk to an acupuncture practitioner who should be able to practice acupressure on you instead. While its results may not be as fast or as complete as acupuncture, there are no needles involved, which some people prefer.

A similar type of treatment that is also related to relieving blockage points is foot reflexology.

This varies from acupuncture and acupressure in the sense that your blockage points are accessed only through pressure points on the soles of your feet. When choosing a place to have foot reflexology done make sure it is a reliable spot. You really don't need more problems when someone presses the wrong pressure points giving you more stress and more sleepless nights.

A Holiday Might Work!

In some cases, insomnia is triggered by a particular event or incident. This may vary from losing someone you love to working on a project at work. If you are able to identify that this is indeed the case, then there is one more idea that might help to relieve your insomnia.

Take a holiday or two or make plans for a long getaway. When planning this, you must remember that you are doing this for yourself so you can relieve your insomnia and get back to your regular sleep pattern, so do it for yourself.

Pick a destination that is quiet, away from the hustle and bustle of the city. If you already know of a cabin in the hills or a beach house that you can go to, then this is the best time to pay a visit. Make sure your traveling does not include crowded roads or busy trains, because that is definitely not going to help. You must ensure that this trip involves a minimum of stress.

Ideally, beach areas or island destinations are best as they offer you the opportunity take long walks alongside scenic views. You would need to escape the crowd, so pick a time when the place is not so crowded.

Seasons to avoid would be school holidays, public holidays or even festive seasons. If you have just lost someone you loved, festive seasons are going to create way too many painful emotions that are definitely going to keep you awake at night, so don't even consider it!

Your holiday should be well-planned so that there are no hiccups that will give you additional stress. Go to a travel agent that will help you with everything from arrival and departure transfers to your hotel rooms.

If you are selecting a resort, go for something that doesn't have connecting rooms. Go for chalet style accommodation that is a sufficient distance from eating outlets or recreation places in the resort because this will give you the privacy you need to relax and sleep minus noisy hotel neighbors.

Conclusion

This book lists a host of ways you can relieve your insomnia and look forward to restful nights of deep sleep. While you will definitely find more than one option that suits your comfort and needs, select only one or two first. Once you discover what the benefits or disadvantages of this particular 'method' are for you, then you can move on to trying other ways of relieving the stress that keeps you awake at nights.

The first step is to define what kind of insomnia you actually have, before starting to take whatever steps are necessary to relieve it.

If you are already on medication from a doctor, then check with your doctor first on how it would affect you if you were to stop these pills and move on to natural cures.

Some types of medication need to be reduced gradually and cannot be stopped immediately. Stopping suddenly in this way might produce side effects that could adversely affect your sleep even more.

When trying any of the natural remedies listed in this book, if you find yourself having any form of allergic or nervous reactions, then you must seek medical treatment or stop the remedy that you are experimenting with.

The remedies listed in this book vary from using traditional herbs and traditional practices to more modern ones. While they have definitely worked in many cases, please bear in mind that even after trying these remedies, you may still find that your insomnia persists.

If so, the important thing is to discover what it is that is actually causing your sleep to be disrupted, or perhaps seek further professional help in getting to the bottom of your sleeping problems.

To reiterate the main points that have been discussed this book, firstly, remember that sleep is very important for all areas of your life including your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Other than that, the main points to remember are:

Primary insomnia is not induced by any single factor and is a condition by itself that can last up to a maximum of one month.

Secondary insomnia indicates that the insomnia is being caused by other factors related to emotional, neurological or medical disorders that a person is already having.

Relieving secondary insomnia can happen over time depending on how soon the causes can actually be determined and eventually eliminated.

Your bedroom is meant for sleep, relaxation and renewal. Carrying work with you into bed is going to put more pressure on you.

Making sure that bright colors in the room 'work' (directly related to Chromatherapy) includes making sure you have the right color of paint on your bedroom walls and that the colors of your sheets are suitable.

Try to establish the same time for waking up and going to bed every day. This will help your body to automatically adjust to a proper sleeping time.

Exercise must if at all possible be undertaken at least 3 times a week for about 20 minutes to 30 minutes per session to increase your heart rate and strengthen your lung capacity.

People around you who are noisy, distractive or tend to have irregular sleeping habits, this can affect you more than you think.

Despite all the modern diets, the best rule of the thumb is still to take a heavy breakfast, a medium sized lunch and a light dinner. Heavy dinners will only stress your digestive system and a heavy stomach will not let sleep come easy.

Choose healthy snacks that are good enough to nourish you and keep you going without stressing out your digestive system with unnecessary fats and oils.

Alcohol induced sleep will make you a light sleeper and you will find yourself woken by every small sound and movement.

You must have at least two hot showers a day and your body must be clean when getting into bed.

Being anxious about when you sleep will only increase your insomnia. The calmer you are when drifting off to sleep, the more restful your sleep becomes.

Give yourself enough time to get from one point to another during the day. Trying to sleep fitfully through the night and then jumping out of bed in a flurry of activity is bound to affect you.

Thinking positive and building up your confidence is a MUST. Putting yourself down is not going to help cure your insomnia. It will make it worse if you go to sleep every night telling yourself you have a problem.

Relax by picking up a hobby or attending a workshop that you fancy.

A Feng Shui guide will explain the items that you should and should not have while also guiding you on the placement of furniture, colours and accessories that you would need to add on.

No matter how overwhelming the day gets, make sure you get at least 5 minutes of 'you' time at intervals, by taking a deep breath and thinking of nothing.

The chances of feeling renewed and relaxed are very high if you are willing to try acupuncture.

Make sure you follow a routine at work. There's no use in putting in more than your necessary hours when this is bound to effect your sleeping pattern.

Watching TV just before you sleep is not going to help, as thought provoking programs, action or horror movies are going to put ideas into your mind.