

NATURAL REMEDIES FOR **INSOMNIA**



A deep and restful sleep is essential to both our physical and emotional well-being. Our circadian rhythm, or internal body clock, not only regulates our sleep patterns, but also influences our blood pressure, body temperature, appetite, and the release of essential hormones by our brain. Those that experience insomnia, or frequently interrupted sleep, will find it difficult to maintain good health and mental and emotional energy levels.

causes

Insomnia can be caused by a variety of factors – medical issues, medication used to address those issues, mental or emotional stress, pain, menopause or other hormone imbalances, stimulating foods, or environmental disturbances. It is important to identify the underlying cause of the sleeplessness in order to treat it successfully. It may be necessary to find professional help to determine the root cause, but here are some general suggestions that may be helpful.

daily habits to promote deep sleep

Consistent moderate exercise can improve the quantity and quality of your sleep. It helps to strengthen your circadian rhythms by promoting more alertness during the day and a deeper sleep at night. As little as 10 minutes of aerobic exercise (such as walking or cycling) or even a more gentle tai chi or yoga is beneficial, especially if done outside where your body can absorb natural sunlight. Some people find evening exercise over-stimulating so you may want to avoid strenuous workouts within 3 to 4 hours of bedtime.

Eat healthy foods and keep your blood sugar levels balanced for improved sleep patterns. Try to avoid foods that can trigger painful indigestion or heartburn, especially at night (fried or spicy foods, citrus fruits, carbonated drinks, etc.).

Limit daytime naps to 20-30 minutes if needed.

Avoid stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine close to bedtime. Use alcohol in moderation. While a glass of wine at bedtime may help you feel tired initially, it can prevent a deeper sleep during the night as your body works to process the alcohol. Eating some protein with your drink will help slow down your metabolism.

Sleep is the golden chain that binds health and our bodies together.

THOMAS DEKKER

create a restful environment

If possible, clear your sleeping space of clutter and distraction. Turn off electronics and bright lights. Blackout curtains or an eye mask may be helpful. Use ear plugs or “white noise” machines or a fan that can make the bedroom more relaxing. Temperatures should be cool (between 60-67 degrees) for optimal sleep. A snoring spouse or pet on the bed may also interrupt deep sleep. Consider moving the pet to their own bed or helping the spouse resolve their snoring issue.

establish a regular nightly routine

A consistent nightly routine can help your body recognize when it is time to go to sleep. Set your phone to night mode after 7 p.m. so it is not emitting blue light. Turn off the TV and other devices one hour before bedtime. Journal to clear your mind, or meditate to release anxiety. Turn on some quiet music. Take a warm shower or bath, read a book, or do some light stretches to relax tense muscles. Going to bed at the same time each night will make it easier for your body to maintain a consistent rhythm and deeper sleep cycle.

other natural sleep remedies

There are many essential oils that have been shown to have relaxing and sedative properties. These oils may be diffused into the air or lightly sprayed onto your pillow to relax the air in the bedroom. Add a few drops to a warm bath, or massage in a carrier oil to the bottoms of your feet or on the back of your neck. Some of the oils most effective in promoting relaxation and a restful sleep include lavender, roman chamomile, cedarwood, marjoram, vetiver, frankincense and ylang ylang.

Other herbs and supplements such as chamomile, valerian root, lemon balm or melatonin are also considered natural sleep aides. Try drinking a warm cup of herbal tea as part of your nightly bedtime routine.

Using crystals may be another excellent way to help clear your energy and allow your mind and body to rest. Look for crystals that are grounding, calming or comforting, such as rose quartz, black tourmaline, selenite or hematite. Crystals can be placed under your bed, by your bedside or under your pillow. Experiment with type and placement to decide what works best for you. You may need to use a smaller crystal or move it further away if you are a light sleeper. Start with just one crystal at a time to prevent over-stimulation.

breathe

Finally, deep breathing sends a signal to your body that everything is OK. When you are in a stressed or anxious state, your breathing is often shallow because you are in a fight or flight mode. Breathing deeply lets your body know that it can switch back to a state of homeostasis and peace. Breathe deeply tonight when you are ready to drift off to sleep and feel the energy of relaxation wash over you. Sweet Dreams!



INSOMNIA quick reference guide

DAILY HABITS

- Daily Exercise
- Short naps during the day
- Eat healthy foods
- Avoid stimulants at bedtime

ENVIRONMENT

- Clear room of clutter
- Turn off electronics
- Turn off bright lights.
- Use blackout curtains or an eye mask
- Use ear plugs or “white noise” machines
- Cool temperatures
- Limit noise/distractions