



A number of things can cause trouble sleeping. A poor night's sleep can be influenced by how you think and how you act. It can be caused by the events in your life or by what you are thinking. Your thoughts are very important in helping you get a good night's sleep.

## Here are ways to change your thoughts about poor sleep that will help:

- Shift your focus from sleep to something else like a leisure activity. Do not blame all your problems on poor sleep.
- Do not over-generalize. Be aware of the good night's sleep you have had as well as the poor. Keep a sleep diary.
- Do not panic.
- Do not try so hard to sleep. Just stay awake one night and read or relax. Try to reduce the pressure about having to sleep.

## Here are some general rules to improve your sleep that do work:

- **Do** develop a sleep routine, such as a bath. Do this every night.
- **Do** a "wind down" activity each night, such as reading, but not in bed.
- **Do** use your bed only for sleeping or sex, not for watching TV, eating, or reading.
- **Do** eat a light snack before bed if you are hungry.
- **Do** set a regular bedtime and wake time every day.
- **Do** go to bed only when you are sleepy.
- **Do** wear comfortable clothes.
- **Do** have a comfortable temperature in your room.
- **Do** keep your room quiet and dark. Wear earplugs if needed.
- **Do** get treatment if you are depressed.
- **Do** challenge your worries and fears about lack of sleep.
- **Do not** consume coffee, tea, pop, or chocolate after 4 in the afternoon.
- **Do not** watch the clock all night. Turn it toward the wall.
- **Do not** eat a big meal close to your bedtime.
- **Do not** drink alcohol before bedtime. It will disrupt your sleep pattern.

- **Do not** exercise 4 hours before your bedtime.
- **Do not** smoke cigarettes before bedtime. They keep you awake and cause withdrawal (you will wake up early).
- **Do not** nap during the day.
- **Do not** spend lots of time awake in your bed. Get up after 20 minutes of trying to sleep and do something relaxing—then try again.

*Adapted from:* How To Get A Good Nights Sleep - H.A.Westra & R.A.Young (1998) *by:* Susan Charlton RN, BScN & Elizabeth Emberly RN, BScN (CDMHP, 2003)

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