

Healthy Sleep: A Guide to Natural Sleep Remedies

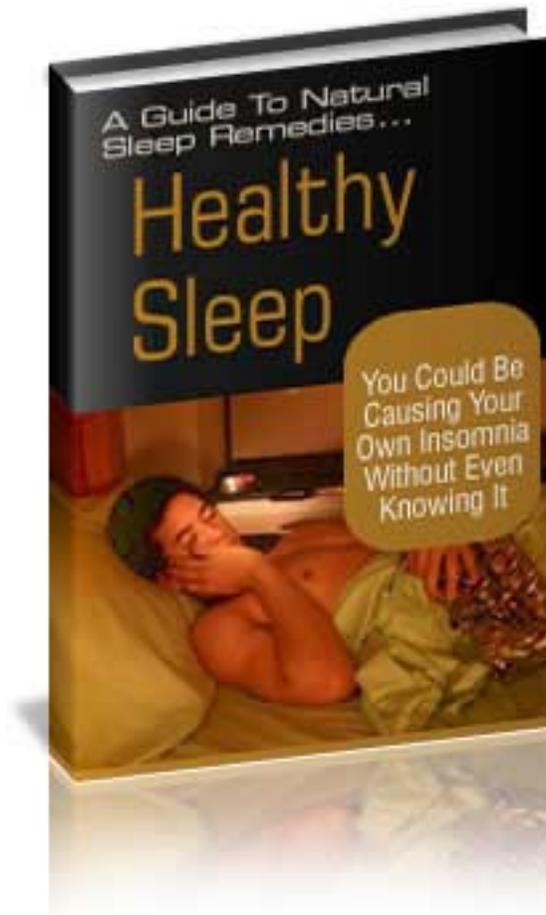


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Introduction

Many of us experience the occasional night of sleeplessness without any consequences. It is when the occasional night here and there becomes a pattern of several nights in a row that you are faced with a sleeping problem.

Repeated loss of sleep affects all areas of your life: The physical, the mental, and the emotional. Sleep deprivation can affect your overall daily performance and may even have an effect on your personality.

If your insomnia continues for a long period of time it can cause problems in your relationships, compromise your productivity, and perhaps lead to other health problems.

It can become a relentless cycle of worry and anxiety as night after night you toss and turn, wondering when sleep will come, wondering what is wrong with you.

Insomnia and sleeplessness generally fall into three categories:

1. "Initial" insomnia: where you have difficulty in falling asleep, generally taking 30 minutes or longer to fall into a sleep state.
2. "Middle" insomnia: where after falling asleep you have problems maintaining a sleep state, often remaining awake until the early morning hours.
3. "Late" or "Terminal" insomnia: where you awake early in the morning after less than 6 hours of sleep.

Insomnia can be the symptom of some medical conditions that may require your doctor's advice and medical care. In those cases the cause will be treated, not the insomnia.

If, however, your sleeplessness is due to a pattern of not sleeping, or because your body and mind find it difficult to settle into a state of relaxation necessary for sleep, this book offers you alternative choices for achieving healthy sleep without the use of prescription drugs.

This book will teach you how to:

- Set the mood for a comfortable sleep atmosphere
- Prepare your body for relaxation
- Use colors to stimulate calmness and relaxation
- Understand the importance of exercise
- Use music and other relaxation techniques
- Relieve your mind of anxiety and worry
- Discover the importance of reducing stimulants
- Use herbal teas and warm drinks to promote relaxation
- Use herbs and vitamins to promote natural sleep

After reading this book you will have the information you need to turn your sleepless nights into restful ones, waking in the morning refreshed and alert rather than tired and anxious.

All of the techniques and sleep-inducing aids in this book can be applied naturally and easily in your life. Get ready to embark on the journey of falling asleep naturally!

Bedtime Routine

It is essential that you establish a bedtime routine that works for you and stick with it. Your body and mind need to have consistency at this time so that you can learn to fall asleep naturally.

Once you have read this book you should decide on a course of action and stick with it for at least a week or two before making changes to your routine.

Write down your plan of action, including bedtime and waking time. Keep a list of the herbs and vitamins that you have tried as well as what teas you prefer.

Stick to your routine and after a week or two has passed and you are still experiencing difficulty sleeping make appropriate adjustments. The key here is to be consistent and determined.

Your goal should be to establish a regular sleep schedule. Wake up each morning at the same time and try not to oversleep. Sleeping longer in the morning will only make you feel groggy and disoriented.

Sleep experts believe that you should get an average of seven to eight hours of sleep each night. You can't make up for sleep that you lose during the night by sleeping in later in the morning.

Simply do your best during the day and try to get back to your sleep schedule that night.

Try to get ready for bed at the same time each night. Once you have established what hours work best for you then try to be consistent.

It is important to realize that a regular bedtime routine is imperative to your goal of achieving natural sleep. Create a routine that will prepare you for sleep.

The routine can include many of the suggestions found in this book or they can be as simple as brushing your teeth or reading a book. Whatever routine you decide on it will be a way of telling your unconscious that it is time to fall asleep.

Try to make sure that your routine is relaxing and not stimulating so that your mind can rest.

Make sure that daytime naps are not part of your daily routine!

If you allow yourself to sleep during the day, even if it just for a few minutes, you will confuse your body's ability to differentiate between day and night sleeping.

Make an effort to try staying active when you are feeling tired during the day and eat a small piece of fruit to increase your energy level.

Remember that natural remedies work differently for each individual. Think positive thoughts as you design a sleep routine that is right for you.

Don't become discouraged if you have to change and alter your nighttime routine after a couple of weeks.

With perseverance and determination you will achieve natural sleep.

Room Conditions

After establishing a consistent bedtime routine it is important to create a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere in your bedroom. The more cozy and harmonic your bedroom is the more relaxed you will feel.

Your goal is to promote a calming and restive atmosphere. This can be achieved by creating a bedroom environment that is not only appealing to you but also functions without interruptions or annoying irritations.

Ensure that the room temperature is set according your preference. Ideally your room should be on the cooler side; however you should experiment with your own comfort level.

You don't want to wake during the night either too hot or too cold and then find yourself wide awake once again. Sleep experts say that the ideal room temperature is 65 to 70 degrees F.

If at all possible try to sleep with the window open, however slightly. This will allow for proper room ventilation. Adequate air current is necessary for you to breathe in circulating air. This will aid your body in breathing deeply and correctly.

You may be sensitive to noises around you and outside of the bedroom. If this is the case and you find that noise is disturbing or interrupting your sleep you may want to consider purchasing ear plugs.

Ear plugs may take a little getting used to, however there are plugs on

the market that are specifically designed to be comfortable and unobtrusive to your sleep. Take time to try what works best for you.

If you find ear plugs to be too uncomfortable you may want to use a "white noise" machine, such as a fan. "White noise" from the fan is used to over-ride or mask other sounds that may be disturbing to your sleep, such as traffic and voices.

Ideally your bedroom should be as dark as possible so that you experience the daytime/nighttime cycle. Light may disrupt your normal circadian rhythm and signal your body that it is time to wake up.

If you find it difficult to fall asleep in a room that is infused with too much light, try purchasing an eye mask. There are eye masks on the market that will be comfortable to wear as well as effectively block out any interfering light.

If you find an eye mask to be too uncomfortable try hanging thick curtains or install blinds.

If you find yourself listening to the sound of a ticking clock you may want to remove the clock from your bedroom and replace it with a digital clock.

If you find yourself constantly looking at the time to see how many hours you have left to sleep you may want to turn the digital clock to the wall. Knowing that time is passing will only increase your anxiety and stress about not sleeping.

Make sure that your room has no stimulation to lure you from sleep.

This includes the television, computer, stereo equipment. You want to ensure that your bedroom is only used for sleeping and sex.

If you have a CD player in the bedroom make sure that you only use it for playing relaxing music or sleep inducing CDs.

If you find that your room is too dry you may want to purchase a humidifier, especially in the winter months.

Wear comfortable, loose clothing. The more constrained or uncomfortable you are the more likely you are to wake up during the night.

The goal of this chapter is to encourage you to find the ideal sleep conditions for your personal preferences. You may have to experiment and try a variety of techniques to find what works best for you.

Comfort and Posture

As you make changes in your life to promote and achieve natural sleep you should take into consideration the conditions of your bed, bedding, and sleeping clothing.

The goal is to be as comfortable as possible and to avoid any irritations that will prevent you from falling asleep or that may wake you during the night.

You may have to make adjustments as you experiment with what works best for you.

Your mattress should be comfortable and firm so as to provide you with

sufficient spinal support. It should be free of lumps and bumps.

Make sure that the bed is big enough for your stature. If you have been sleeping on a single mattress and find that you are needing more space you may want to consider purchasing a double or a queen size mattress.

Make sure that the mattress does not sag as this can lead to inadequate spinal support.

Use a pillow that suits your personal preference. It can be soft or firm so long as it provides you with the proper support and is anatomically correct.

You can place an herbal sachet underneath your pillow to benefit from the sleep inducing properties provided by herbs.

The bedding on your bed should be crisp and clean. You may want to leave the sheets un-tucked at the bottom of the bed so that your feet feel free and unconstrained.

Try not to use too many or too few blankets. Your goal is to find the right temperature for sleeping so that you are not waking at night to make adjustments. You should be sleeping in a cool room so take that into account when you use blankets.

The pajamas you wear to bed should be loose and comfortable. Tight clothing may cause you to feel restricted and wake during the night.

Do not use your bed for anything other than sleeping or sex. Your mind and body should associate the bed with rest and sleep.

Your bed should be a place of comfort and harmony for you. Take pleasure in finding bedding and sleeping clothing that makes you feel calm and

good about you.

Find a favorite position to fall asleep in, whether it is on your back, stomach, or on your side. Stick to this position when you first get into bed so that your consciousness is convinced that it is time for sleep.

Chromatherapy

Color therapy or *Chromatherapy* is the use of color to promote general health and also to treat particular maladies (including but not limited to sleep-oriented problems).

Chromatherapy can be used to treat both emotional and physical sleep disturbances, and may involve exposure to colored lights, massages using color-saturated oils and salves, meditation and visualization of certain colors, or wearing certain colors of clothing.

Color has been used for centuries in the treatment of a wide variety of disorders.

In India, practitioners of Ayurvedic medicine believed that specific colors corresponded with each of the seven chakras, vortices of energy in the body that represent organs, emotions, and aspects of the soul or life force.

In the days of ancient Egypt, practitioners built solariums with specifically designed glasses and lenses that served to break up the sun's rays into the colors of the spectrum.

In the late 17th century modern-day color theory was born when English mathematician and philosopher Sir Isaac Newton conducted his prism

experiments and showed that light is truly a mixture of colors from the visible spectrum.

But it was not until the late 1800s, when Dr. Edwin D. Babbitt published his book *Principles of Light and Color*, that Chromatherapy as we know it was outlined.

It is in this work that Dr. Babbitt suggests the use of color as a treatment for a variety of ailments, including sleep and anxiety disorders.

In the late 1940s, Russian researcher S.V. Krakov conducted a series of experiments in which he separated the different wavelengths in the light spectrum to show how color affects the nervous system.

In his experiments, he observed that red light stimulated the adrenal glands, raising blood pressure and pulse rate, and that blue and white light had a calming, relaxing effect.

The fruits of Krakov's studies are still used today by many practitioners, and his brand of color therapy is commonly recommended for stress and for stress-related pain.

In recent years studies have demonstrated the positive effects of full-spectrum light on seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and other forms of depression, which has resulted in increased public awareness of color therapy.

It is becoming more and more common to find mainstream researchers turning to chromatherapy for a variety of ailments as well, particularly sleep disorders.

Color is a property of light, which is made up of many different waves of energy. When light falls upon the photoreceptor cells of the retina, it is converted into electrical impulses.

These impulses travel to the brain and trigger the release of hormones. The release of these hormones in controlled bursts can be used to treat the body and mind for many of the medical conditions that hinder sleep as well as promote conditions that are conducive to sleep and rest.

While many forms of chromatherapy can and should only be practiced by licensed practitioners and/or medical doctors, some forms of color therapy are simple and safe enough to be practiced in the comfort of your own home.

These include wearing clothing of particular hues, surrounding yourself with a recommended color, eating certain colorful foods, and concentration on visualizing a particular color.

Some Cautions:

- Never use color therapy instead of conventional care for serious sleep problems.
- If you suffer from epilepsy, use caution when looking at flashing lights.
- If you are receiving colored light therapy, avoid looking directly into the light source. Look at an object illuminated by the colored lights instead.

- When taking prescription drugs, read the warning label to make sure that no side effects are induced if your skin is exposed to bright light.

Exercise

The amount of physical activity that you expend during the day is a key ingredient to helping you sleep restfully at night. The more active your body is during the day the more likely you are able to relax fully at night and fall asleep easily.

With regular exercise your sleep quality is improved and the transition between the cycles and phases of sleep becomes smoother and more regular. Keeping up your physical activity during the day may also help you deal with the stress and worry in your life.

Studies indicate that there is a direct correlation between how much we exercise and how we feel both emotionally and physically by changes in our brain chemistry that occur from regular exercise.

Try to increase your physical daily activity during the day. The goal here is to give your body enough stimulation during the day so that you are not restless at night.

Our bodies require a certain amount of physical activity in order to function in a healthy manner. It is important to note that you should not be exercising three to four hours before bed.

The ideal time for you to exercise is in the late afternoon or early

evening. You want to expend your physical energy long before it is time for your body to rest and ready itself for sleep.

Attempt to exercise at least three to four times a week for a continuous period of 20 to 30 minutes. This can include something as simple as walking or something as strenuous as running.

The goal is to increase your heart rate and strengthen your lung capacity. Adding a regular exercise activity to your daily schedule will improve your overall health and benefit you emotionally. This is can help promote a natural remedy for your sleeplessness.

Besides walking and running there are many physical activities that you can add to your life to increase your activity level. Aerobic exercises seem to work best to battle sleeplessness.

Your goal is to increase the amount of oxygen that reaches your blood. There are many types of aerobic activities to choose from. These include running, biking, using a treadmill, jumping rope, and dancing.

Some non-aerobic activities may be beneficial to you as you attempt to solve your insomnia problem. The following activities are relaxing and have other healing properties:

- *Yoga* has a stimulatory effect on your nervous system, particularly the brain. Yoga uses breathing techniques and yoga postures to increase blood circulation to the brain centre, promoting regular and restful sleeping patterns. Regular practice of yoga will relax you as well as

relieve stress and tension.

- *Tai Chi* is a form of breathing and movement that was developed by ancient Chinese monks. The movements involved in Tai Chi are precise and slow, which is ideal if you have joint pain or are unable to participate in high impact aerobic exercises. Studies have shown that Tai Chi may help people with insomnia by promoting relaxation.

If you find that you have no time to exercise on a regular basis try sneaking extra moments of activity into your daily schedule. Take the stairs instead of the elevator whenever possible.

Try parking your car around the corner and walking that extra block to your appointment. There are many small ways that you can incorporate some added activity into your life. Your goal is to have a healthy, well balanced life.

Meditation

Meditation is a proven technique to encourage and promote relaxation. The more relaxed you are as you get ready for bed the better your chances of falling into a deep, restful sleep cycle.

It is important that you learn to put your stress, tensions, and worries to the side before you fall asleep. Meditation can help you achieve this relaxed state and focus on peace and harmony.

There are many different types of meditations available for you to use, each with many adaptations and versions.

To get you started, here is a simple technique that is simple to do and very effective at promoting relaxation:

Find a focus point for your meditation. This can be a candle, a *mantra*, a stone, or something as simple as the sound of your own breathing. A mantra is a phrase, usually a Hindu phrase, which you repeat over and over in your mind to establish harmony and to focus on your meditation. No matter what you are using for your focus point the goal is to continuously and firmly bring your mind back to what you are focusing on. All other thoughts and distractions that drift through your mind must be pushed out. If you are beginning to include meditation in your nighttime routine you should remember that this type of meditation requires a great deal of discipline. Your mind will easily be distracted and you will lose focus. As you continue to practice your meditation nightly you will find that the process becomes easier and easier. You may find that meditating 10 to 15 minutes before bed will help to fall asleep naturally.

Here is another simple technique for meditation:

- Find a quiet room.
- Sit in a comfortable position on the floor (use a cushion if needed).

- Sit with your hands resting lightly in your lap.
- Close your eyes and relax.
- Take deep breaths in and out through your nose.
- Try to focus on your breathing. Count each breath as you exhale.
Count to ten. Repeat several times until relaxation sets in.
- Clear your mind of everything and think only of counting each breath as you exhale.
- Acknowledge any other thoughts that enter your mind, and then gently let them go and concentrate once again on your breathing.
- At the end of the meditation gently stretch and become aware of your body before standing up

Another form of meditation is guided imagery. Guided imagery is combination of meditation, relaxation, and hypnosis. Using this technique you will follow a guided meditation to visualize a state of relaxation.

It is best practiced in a quiet room where you won't be disturbed. You will need a tape or CD player. The lighting in the room should be dim and soft.

Typically the visualization will begin with some simple relaxation exercises that include deep breathing. When your body and mind are relaxed your imagination will come into play.

Some common imagery includes walking along the beach, being the mountains, or walking through the forest. The guided imagery uses your imagination to induce peacefulness and relaxation. You will be guided through the meditation from beginning to end, at which time you should feel calm and serene.

There are many imagery tapes on the market for you to choose from. You can also make your own tapes.

The above techniques for meditation will help your mind and body to relax. Your goal is to be as rested as possible as you prepare to sleep. There are many other methods of meditation available. You may have to research and experiment and find what works best for you.

Breathing and Relaxation Techniques

There are many breathing and relaxation techniques that you can learn to use to promote relaxation and relieve stress. The deeper and slower that you breathe the more relaxed and sedated you will become.

Sleeping with the window open will help the air to circulate in your bedroom and fill your lungs with fresh air. Relaxation techniques will help your body to wind down and prepare for the sleep cycle.

Try this breathing technique when you first get into bed:

1. Take a deep breath.
2. Breathe in through your nose and visualize the air moving down to

your stomach.

3. As you breathe in again silently count to four.
4. Purse your lips as you exhale slowly.
5. This time count silently to eight.
6. Repeat this process six to ten times.

The results of this breathing technique are immediate. You will feel your shoulders and arms relaxing. Your chest will feel less constricted and you will feel less stress and tension.

Practice this breathing technique on a daily basis so that it becomes a natural routine for you and helps to induce natural sleep.

As well as using breathing techniques to encourage natural sleep you can try several relaxation exercises. The goal is to relax your mind and let your body unwind and surrender to sleep.

Try the following relaxation exercise before you get into bed:

1. Lay on your back on the floor with your feet slightly apart, your hands by your sides, and your palms turned upward.
2. Close your eyes and concentrate on every part of your body.
3. Begin at the top of your head and work your way down to your toes.
4. Start by feeling your forehead tense, then your eyes, face, and jaw.

5. Tense and release each muscle group, such as your shoulders and neck.
6. Give attention to each area of your body from the top of your head, down through the trunk of your body, down along your legs, and ending at the tip of your toes.
7. Stay in this relaxed condition for a few minutes. Concentrate on your breathing and let all worry and stress dissipate from your mind and body. Make sure that your breathing comes from deep in your stomach and flows slowly and evenly.
8. Stretch slowly before standing.

The above exercise will tell your body and mind that it is okay to settle down, leaving behind thoughts of worry, fear, and stress.

There are many more techniques and exercises available to promote deep breathing and relaxation. You will have to find what method works best for you.

Your goal is to recognize that deep breathing and concentrated relaxation are tools available for you to achieve natural sleep.

Sleep Inducing Music and Sounds

Music and sound are excellent resources in the quest for sleep and relaxation.

For as long as anyone can remember, the lullaby has been an effective

tool for easing the sleep-hindering tension of even the most tense of babies and adults alike.

Nearly everyone can remember a time when our mother lulled us to dreamland by softly singing our favorite sleepy time anthems, followed by the gentle humming of the self same tune until finally even the crankiest of us were slumbering away as peaceful as can be.

There are many different types of compact discs and sound making devices on the market that can assist in the relaxation process.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- *Classical music CDs/tapes* are a great way to unwind and put yourself in the mindset for a good night's sleep. Brahms's "Lullaby", Mozart's "Baroque Music", and "Waltzes" by Strauss are just a few examples of some of the most relaxing classical music out there.
- *Ambient Electronica (sometimes referred to as "downtempo" or "chillout") CDs/tapes* are another excellent choice for "music to snooze by". This particular genre of electronic music eschews the pulsating beat of techno and house for non-linear progressions, soothing melodies, syncopated rhythms and gentle sound effects. Some great examples of this type of music are The Orb, Future Sound of London, Aphex Twin and Brian Eno.
- *New Age/Tribal music CDs/tapes* are similar in sound and

composition to Ambient Electronica, but feature more organic sounds and diverse non-electronic instruments such as didgeridoos, flutes, harpsichords, chimes and bells. This type of music often uses rhythmic drumming (similar to the beats found in a tribal drum circle), chanting or throat sounds.

- *Sound Effects CDs/tapes* are a bit different in that they are not necessarily “music” at all. You can buy prerecorded media that has various soothing relaxation-oriented sound effects such as waterfalls, babbling brooks, wind, rain, whale songs, water drops, and other natural sounds. Recordings of other types of sounds are also available such as busy city streets, fire engines, airplanes and other noise, which are great for city dwellers who find themselves somewhere out of their element where it is just too quiet.
- *Sound generating machines* are common and available in a wide variety of price points. These devices are usually about the size and shape of a standard alarm clock (and occasionally come built into alarm clock/bedside radios) and usually come with a variety of preset noises that are conducive to sleep and relaxation. Some of these gadgets simply have recorded waveforms that loop continuously, but some models include features such as auto fading after a preset amount of time or the ability to set alarms that gently rouse the sleeper awake. When shopping for sleep sound noise machines, it is important to consider whether the

device can play randomly synthesized sounds or can only playback recorded samples. The former, although a bit more expensive, are typically much better at inducing the sleep state rhythms than the latter, due to the fact that they mimic their natural counterpart more closely.

The effectiveness of music as a therapeutic tool in dealing with insomnia varies from individual to individual.

Depending on the patient and type of insomnia, what works for one person will not necessarily work for another. Some people will have better results with rhythm and gentle percussion, while others will respond more positively to melody or non-linear compositions.

Some will react to constant repetition, while others benefit from randomness.

Even to this very day, science is exploring the potential of music and sounds effect on sleep patterns, dream states and consciousness in general.

On the ultra high tech side of things, researchers at the sleep clinic of the University of Toronto's psychiatry department and the University Health Network's Toronto Western Hospital are studying the ability of "brain music" -- EEG recordings converted into musical compositions in a computerized process -- to assist in relaxation and improvement in the overall quality of sleep.

Essentially, the researchers create custom soundtracks for each individual sleeper by studying a person's brain waves to determine which

rhythmic and tonal sound patterns create a condition conducive to sleep in each individual subject.

The data is then fed into a computer program developed by the researchers which then generates unique "meditative" music that will create those same brain wave patterns when the individual is trying to sleep later.

Studies have shown that this "brainwave soundtrack" has the potential to alleviate brain conditions that result in anxiety and sleeplessness while not subjecting the patient to dangerous, potentially habit forming chemicals.

Reduce Nighttime/Evening Stimulation

The more relaxed you are before you begin your nighttime routine the more successful you will be. An hour before going to bed it's a good idea to reduce any type of external stimulation that could be causing your mind and body to remain overly alert.

Avoid watching television since watching television keeps your senses active.

If you find yourself unable or reluctant to give up that last hour of television try to choose programming that is more relaxing rather than violent and action filled.

Never watch television in your bedroom. Your mind and body need to separate the event of sleeping from the action of watching television.

Do not exercise two to three hours before bed. This was discussed and stressed in a previous chapter and bears mentioning again. Exercise will

increase your blood flow and heart rate, thus awakening your mind and body.

This is the opposite of what you are trying to accomplish. Reserve exercise for the earlier part of the day to ensure that you get the most out of your physical routine.

Try to avoid going to bed immediately after you have been out for the evening. Your mind will be stimulated from outside events and you may find it difficult to relax sufficiently enough to complete your nighttime routine.

As you work through the remedies in this book to reach your goal of healthy sleeping you may find it necessary to adjust your evening hours so that you are returning home with plenty of time to complete the bedtime routine you have designed for yourself.

Light reading may be included in your nighttime routine, especially if you find that reading makes you drowsy. Avoid reading anything too stimulating, such as work-related material or text books.

This will be a personal preference and over time you will discover what catapults your mind into a state of relaxation and what increases your thinking activity.

Make note that you don't want to fall asleep in bed with the light on. This will likely cause you to waken at some point during the night, effectively sabotaging your efforts to establish your sleep routine.

The goal of this chapter is to find an equal balance in your life between relaxation and stimulation.

The easier and faster that you can relax in the evening the more

successful you will be when it comes to falling asleep naturally.

Avoid Stimulants

Along with external stimulants there are several internal stimulants that you should try to avoid. The following foods and beverages contain caffeine, sugars, and chemicals that may affect the way you relax, think, and feel. This does not mean that you have to eliminate these substances from your diet entirely. It only means that you should avoid them in the evenings after your last meal of the day.

- *Caffeine* affects everyone differently but is generally considered a stimulant that increases your heart rate and wakens your mind and body. Try to have your last beverage that contains caffeine at least three to four hours before bed. Caffeine can be found in drinks other than coffee. This includes colas, non-herbal teas, and chocolate drinks.
- *Chocolate* contains both caffeine and enormous amounts of sugars. Your body reacts to sugar much as it does to caffeine. It stimulates your body and mind for a short period of time (chemical reaction needed here). Try to avoid chocolate in any form at least two to three hours before bed.
- *Soda Drinks* contain huge amounts of sugar and colas have the added impact of caffeine. The carbonation of pop drinks can cause bloating and stomach gas which can create discomfort. Try to eliminate soda

beverages from your evening diet.

- *Alcoholic beverages* should be avoided before bed. Alcohol may make you drowsy and cause you to fall asleep easily. However, you may find yourself waking during the night feeling dehydrated and have difficulty falling asleep again. Although an evening glass of wine may relax you, it is not something you want to become dependent upon as a sleep aid. This could lead to a reliance on alcohol to signal your body that it is time for sleep, thus leading to addiction.
- *Smoking* can signal your body to wake during the night as your body's need for nicotine increases toward the morning hours. If at all possible try to reduce the amount you smoke before bed. Your goal is not only to fall asleep naturally, but also to remain asleep for the entire night.

Caffeine in common beverages and drugs:

Coffee (5 oz. cup)	
Brewed, drip method	60 - 180 mg caffeine
Instant	30 - 120 mg caffeine
Decaffeinated	1 - 5 mg caffeine
Tea (5 oz. cup)	
Brewed	60 - 180 mg caffeine

Instant	25 - 50 mg caffeine
Iced (12 oz. Cup)	67 - 76 mg caffeine
Chocolate	
Dark/semisweet	1 oz. - 5 - 35 mg caffeine
Soft Drinks	
Cola (12 oz.)	36 - 47 mg caffeine
Non-prescription Drugs	
Dexatrim	200 mg caffeine
No Doz	100 mg caffeine
Excedrin	65 mg caffeine

Diet

What you eat during the day and evening can affect your sleeping patterns. If your diet consists of a high amount of processed foods you may want to try eating more wholesome products.

You may want to eliminate, reduce, or substitute the amount of sugars, fats, and preservatives from your daily intake of food. This may benefit your ability to fall asleep at night as well as improve your general health.

Eat a well balanced diet by following the recommended daily food

allowance.

Make sure you are meeting the daily requirements for fresh fruits and vegetables. Eat complex carbohydrates and choose protein that is low in fat.

You can also choose healthy meat substitutes, such as tofu and vegetarian burgers.

Become aware of any food allergies that you have and try to avoid them. If your body is allergic to certain foods it may affect the way you think and feel.

This could be a contributing factor to your sleep problem. Some common food allergies that are known to contribute to insomnia are corn, dairy products, wheat, and chocolate.

Try to schedule your last evening meal at least four hours before bed. Eat a healthy, well balanced meal. Try not to overeat as this may cause you to become tired after your meal.

You want to avoid feeling tired or napping in the early evening hours as this will greatly hinder your ability to fall asleep at bedtime. As well, try to eat enough so that you are not hungry later and find yourself reaching for foods that are high in fat or sugars.

If you find that you are hungry before bed you may find that a small snack an hour or two before bedtime will help. Avoid foods that are high in protein, fats, and sugars.

You should also avoid foods that are too heavy or spicy. Try a bit of cereal and milk or one serving of low-fat yogurt. The key idea is to provide

your body with a bit of nourishment to avoid hunger pangs and not overindulge in an evening snack.

The goal is to reduce your hunger and allow your body to rest and relax.

Make sure that you drink enough water during the day. Studies show that your daily recommended water intake should be around 8 glasses, or 2 liters.

If your body is well hydrated it won't signal you to wake up during the night. Try to avoid drinking water or other liquids one hour before bed if the need to urinate wakes you up during the night.

The healthier you eat the more balanced you will feel both physically and emotionally.

The target here is to get you to sleep regularly and deeply without waking during the night.

Reduce Worry/Anxiety

Perhaps you're someone whose mind is always busy. Do you think about the events of your day as you wind down for the evening? Do you worry about your family, your job, your finances, and what tomorrow will bring?

Sometimes it's difficult to empty your mind of all these details long enough to fall asleep. This can lead to tossing and turning as your mind fights sleep.

There are several ways that you can reduce the worry about situations and events in your life long enough to allow you to rest and fall asleep. The

key is finding a process that works for you. The goal is to clear your mind and consciously realize that tomorrow is the time to tackle problems and tonight is the time to sleep.

One technique you can try is the practice of writing down all your worries and concerns before you retire for the night. Keep a notebook available for just this purpose.

List in point form those things that you are worrying about. Make note of which of these items you can deal with tomorrow. Have a decisive plan of action for what you are going to accomplish tomorrow.

This will make you feel positive that tomorrow you will take care of certain items on your "worry list".

Make a separate list in your notebook that contains only those things in your life over which you have no control. Firmly tell yourself that these items are beyond your power.

Once you have completed your two lists it is time to close the notebook and repeat to yourself that you will not think of these worries until tomorrow.

If, during the night, you find yourself thinking about any of the items in either list make a mental note to catch yourself and sternly remind yourself that the covers of the notebook are closed and cannot be opened.

Another technique for keeping daily anxiety and worry out of your thoughts while you try to fall asleep is to keep a daily diary.

Make sure to include all your worries and fears in your diary along with the events of the day. The goal here is to actualize your feelings in writing so

that you can be free of them in the evening.

The act of physically writing is the key here to acknowledging that you are worried while at the same time giving yourself permission to rest and deal with these feelings tomorrow.

You can reduce the effects that worry and stress can create for your body by using some of the other methods for achieving relaxation described in this book.

You may want to consider a combination of soothing music and yoga to clear your mind. Or perhaps reading quietly will keep your mind from wandering back to the stressful thoughts you had during the day.

Once again, the goal here is to relax and prepare you for a night of restful sleep.

Warm Bath

A warm bath an hour or more before bed may help you relax and feel drowsy. It is important that you don't have your bath right before bed as the warm water will raise your body temperature and have an arousing effect on you rather than a sedating one.

You need to allow time for your body temperature to lower by bedtime while still remaining relaxed and peaceful.

The warm water will affect your circulatory system and ease your body into restfulness as well as alleviate tension.

Try adding to the mood of your bath by creating a serene atmosphere:

- Place candles around the bathtub.
- Keep the lighting low.
- Burn your favorite incense.
- Listen to relaxing music.

Add herbs to your bath to induce relaxation. Tie the herbs in a bag and suspend the bag under the hot water while the bath is filling. Soak in the bath and enjoy the aroma of the herbs.

The following herbs are recommended for a relaxing bath:

- Chamomile
- Lavender
- Lime flower
- Mint
- Passion flower

Use aroma therapy oils to promote a relaxing bath. Add four or five drops of the essential oil to your warm bath after the water has been turned off. The following essential oils are recommended:

- Chamomile

- Hops
- Lavender
- Neroli
- Rose
- Vetiver
- Ylang-ylang

Try the following recipe for bath powder and add it to the warm water as the bath is filling. The combination of honey, milk, and lavender will soothe and relax you.

Milk and Honey Bath

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup liquid honey
- 3 cups powdered milk
- Lavender buds

Preparation:

Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl and mix well. Keep the mixture in a tightly sealed jar. Scoop out a generous amount of the milk bath and dissolve in warm water.

The goal of a warm bath is to relax you, easing tension and stress. Try adding it to your bedtime routine using a variety of herbs and essential oils.

Melatonin

Melatonin (*5-methoxy-N-acetyltryptamine*) is a hormone that occurs naturally in human body. At night melatonin is secreted by a tiny, pea-sized organ at the center of our brains called the *pineal gland* to help our bodies regulate our sleep-wake cycles.

Melatonin regulates the body's *circadian rhythm*, our internal 24-hour time-keeping system which plays an important role in controlling when we fall asleep and when we wake up.

Darkness stimulates the release of melatonin and light suppresses its activity in our nervous system. While our pineal gland is capable of producing melatonin for the entirety of our lives, scientists have observed evidence which suggests melatonin production slows down as we age.

Scientists believe this is why younger people tend to have less difficulty with sleeping than older people.

In addition to occurring naturally in the body, melatonin has also been synthesized in the laboratory and is available as a supplement without a prescription in health food and drug stores in the United States for several years, but Melatonin is not regulated by any government agency.

Because it is contained naturally in some foods, the U.S. Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 allows it to be sold as a dietary supplement, which do not need to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or controlled in the same way as drugs.

However, since melatonin products have not been approved by the FDA, their safety, purity and effectiveness can't be guaranteed.

Melatonin has been used successfully in the treatment of many sleep related disorders.

It is particularly effective in treating delayed sleep-phase disorders, and has also been very useful in treating and *preventing* jet lag and jet lag's resulting insomnia.

The proper dosage varies greatly from person to person. Pills are available in a range of doses (commonly from 1mg to 3mg). It is typically suggested to begin with a small dose (around 1mg) and work your way up to larger doses if necessary.

Melatonin should only be taken at nighttime; it is usually most effective when taken about thirty minutes prior to going to sleep.

If you are traveling across multiple time zones and wish to use melatonin to counteract the effects of jet lag, you may want to take a dosage prior to getting on your flight and a higher dosage prior to going to bed.

If you commonly sleep during the night, melatonin should not normally be taken during the day, and vice versa, due to melatonin's role in adjusting the body's internal clock.

When thinking about using melatonin as a sleep aid there are several issues that everyone should be aware of.

First, although it is available over the counter and has been used for several years without instances of severe side effects, the use of melatonin has

not yet been confirmed to be safe by a regulatory body authorized to do so. Of particular concern is the lack of information regarding melatonin's interaction with other medications.

Melatonin is for adult use only. Not for use by children, teenagers, or pregnant or lactating women. If you have an auto-immune disease, diabetes, a depressive disorder, epilepsy, leukemia or a lymphoproliferative disorder, or are taking an MAO inhibitor, consult a physician before taking this product.

Chamomile

Chamomile (*Matricaria camomilla*) is a common flowering plant that is indigenous to various parts of central and southern Europe (Germany, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, and Slovakia), and northwestern Asia.

Chamomile is now widely cultivated in the United States, Australia, Argentina, Egypt, and northern Africa. The dried leaves and flowers are commonly packaged as a tea and can be purchased over the counter in both bagged and loose form.

Chamomile has been used throughout the ages as a very effective sleep aid. It has been administered in a variety of ways including being brewed as a tea and used in a sachet placed underneath a pillow.

Unlike some herbal sleep remedies, chamomile does not have to be used on a regular basis to be effective as a treatment for insomnia. It can be used on the spot to provide quick relief for sleeplessness and anxiety.

Chamomile tea, which is made from the dried flowers and leaves of this common plant, is most effective when sipped a half an hour to forty-five minutes before going to bed.

It has been found that chamomile can be especially helpful in relieving the symptoms of mild insomnia (a.k.a. *transient insomnia*).

Chrysin, a flavonoid component of Chamomile, is the chemical attributed to Chamomile's ability to relieve anxiety and promote sleep.

Chrysin can also be found in Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnatus*), another plant that has been found to be effective in the treatment of insomnia and anxiety.

Chamomile is also known to reduce the histamine-based swelling produced by allergic reactions, and is an excellent solution when congested sinuses or food allergies contribute to sleeplessness.

It should be noted that it is not uncommon for Hay fever sufferers who exhibit an allergic reaction to ragweed and its close botanical relatives (such as *chrysanthemum* and *aster*) to have a similar reaction to chamomile.

Chamomile Tea Recipe (One serving)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp. dried chamomile flowers
- lemon juice

- honey

Preparation:

First, bring the water to the boil in a saucepan. Add the dried chamomile flowers to the water (either directly or using a tea infuser) and boil for thirty to forty-five seconds with the lid on. Remove tea from the heat and let the flowers steep for another minute. The loose flowers can then be removed from the tea using a strainer. Served with honey and a little lemon juice, this tea is a tasty way to unwind after a busy day and its calming properties usually begin to take effect within a half hour of drinking a cup. For added sedative effect, substitute a few leaves of Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*) for the lemon juice.

Lavender

Lavender (*L. angustifolia and others*) is a shrubby flowering bush indigenous to the mountainous regions of the western Mediterranean and is considered have been first domesticated by the Arabians, then later spread across Europe by the Romans.

Lavender was brought to North America by the Pilgrims and was one of the first garden plants imported to Australia in the 19th century. It can be found in abundance in the wild in many parts of the world as well as being garden grown in a sunny, well-drained area, preferably in mildly alkaline soil.

The smaller species will also grow quite easily in well-drained pots. This popular flowering herb's essential oil has been demonstrated to depress the central nervous system in a manner comparable to pharmaceutical tranquilizers.

Lavender is very useful and effective in its usage as a sleep aid. In addition to the use of lavender flowers in a brewed tea, it may also be used in the form of an essential oil distilled from the leaves, flowers and stems of the plant.

Lavender oil can be applied topically to relax the muscles or its aroma can be inhaled for a calming effect. Rubbing lavender essential oil on the feet is a particularly effective method for application, as anything on the feet is absorbed quickly.

It is widely used in aromatherapy and can be added to bathwater, dispersed in a vaporizer or simply dabbed on a tissue and breathed in. The essential oil leaves and flowers can also be employed in a sachet underneath the pillow.

It should be noted that allergic contact dermatitis has been documented in some individuals applying lavender products externally.

To safely detect an allergic reaction it is always a good idea to do a spot test before administering a full application.

Also note that not all varieties of lavender are tranquilizing – some, such as Spanish lavender, can have just the opposite effect.

Lavender Mint Tea (One serving)

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon fresh lavender flowers (or 1/2 teaspoon dried lavender flowers)
- 1 1/2 to 2 tablespoons fresh mint leaves (or 2 teaspoons dried mint)
- 1 cup boiling water
- Rosemary, lemon balm or lemon verbena, and rose geranium may also be added for an interesting multi-herb herbal tea.

Preparation:

In a teapot or saucepan combine the lavender flowers and mint (either loose or using a tea infuser). Pour boiling water over the mixture; steep 5 minutes. The infuser can then be taken out or the leaves removed with a strainer.

Homemade Lavender Sachet

You will need:

- Lavender plant (stems, leaves or buds)
- Lavender essential oil
- A handkerchief

- 2 needles (1 large to fit 1/4" ribbon and 1 regular size)
- Thread
- Ribbon (1/4" wide)

It should be easy to find all the necessary items listed above from your local craft or floral supply store. You may use lavender harvested from your own plants or order the lavender buds online (just enter "lavender" or "lavender buds" into your favorite search engine to find an online retailer).

Instructions:

1. Fold handkerchief in half, and then fold it in half again. You can iron the handkerchief for a crisper look, or simply leave it as is.
2. Now, sew three sides together using needle and thread (or a sewing machine).
3. Open the unsown side of the handkerchief and proceed to fill it (like a pillow) with lavender plant pieces and/or buds. Be sure to use a lot of plant material, but don't stuff it too tight. The end result will be a lot like a beanbag. Sprinkle the pieces with lavender essential oil. 8 to 10 drops should be more than enough.
4. Thread your large needle with 1/4" ribbon and loosely thread to keep the plant materials inside your homemade sachet.
5. Tie the whole thing off with a knot.
6. Enjoy your new sachet

Valerian Root

In the wild, Valerian root (*Valeriana officinalis*) is found in high pastures and dry heath land. It flowers in late spring.

The principle components used for medicinal purposes are the roots and rhizomes, which are typically harvested in September and then dried to produce the commonly available herbal product.

Valerian is also known by various folk names: All-Heal, Amantilla, Bloody Butcher, Capon's Trailer, Cat's Valerian, English Valerian, Fragrant Valerian, Garden Heliotrope, Phu, Red Valerian, St. George's Herb, Sets Wale, Set Well, and Vandal Root.

Unlike many other natural herbal sleep aids, to gain the benefits of the effects of valerian root it is necessary to use it on a regular basis, with the full effects coming to fruition slowly and steadily over time.

It should be used for about one month to produce results. Regular use of valerian root promotes deep relaxation and sleep.

Studies suggest that valerian is by far the best natural solution for insomnia and general sleeplessness for most individuals.

Research by P.D. Leatherwood, Ph.D., and F. Chauffard, Ph.D., at Nestlé Research Laboratories in Switzerland, determined that a 450 mg dose of valerian in an aqueous extract is the optimum dose as an insomnia treatment; a higher dose typically results in grogginess without increasing effectiveness, and therefore care should be taken when administering valerian as a treatment for insomnia.

Furthermore, in 1982 Leatherwood and colleagues performed a double-blind crossover study of 128 subjects, which found valerian root to not only be effective as a sedative for insomnia, but also effective in improving the overall *quality* of sleep in test subjects.

The effects of valerian on the body are similar to that of benzodiazepine, an active ingredient in Valium™, but without dulling effects or next-day lethargy (it has been suggested that Valium's name was inspired by valerian, although the two are completely different chemically and should not be confused as being the same or even related).

Valerian is commonly prescribed as a calming sleep aid and widely recommended for treating anxiety-related sleep problems.

Unlike other commonly prescribed sleep medication, it is entirely nontoxic, does not impair the ability to drive or operate heavy machinery, nor does it exaggerate the effects of alcohol.

It has been documented that valerian can act as a delayed stimulant for some individuals depending on body chemistry.

In the case of certain metabolic conditions, the effect is one of initially calming them down only to cause a surge of energy several hours later - not an effect desired by those interested in using valerian as a nighttime sleeping remedy.

Some professional herbalists suggest taking fresh valerian root extract as opposed to extract from dried valerian, as it is less likely to cause such a reaction.

Other Herbs

Kava

Kava is the name given by Pacific islanders to both *Piper methysticum*, a shrub belonging to the pepper family Piperaceae, and also the beverage made from it.

Piper methysticum can be found growing in abundance primarily in western Polynesia, especially in Samoa and Tonga, and most of Melanesia, including Fiji. It can also be found in Pohnpei Island, in Micronesia.

Kava can be purchased at health food stores as a standardized extract and as a convenient method of anxiety relief as it is quick acting and extremely potent.

Some vendors have packaged high-powered Kava mixtures in convenient mini spray bottles. These are handy to keep in a knapsack or purse and are highly effective for providing a quick burst of relaxation. Just one or two quick sprays under the tongue can do wonders for tension and jitters.

If you plan on purchasing raw root, it is a good idea to purchase whole, top grade lateral root.

According to Michael Tierra L.Ac., O.M.D., Founder of the American Herbalists Guild -- "Because of its relative safety, the effective daily dose of kava is wide ranging from 70 mg to 200 mg of kavalactones, which are recognized as the major biochemical anti-anxiety constituents. To promote a

deep restful sleep one should take a dose of from 150 mg to 200 mg.
approximately 20 or 30 minutes before retiring."

Lemon Balm

Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*) is an herbaceous perennial in the mint family. It occurs naturally in southern Europe and northern Africa where it grows in roadsides, landfills and disturbed lands from sea level into the mountains.

It can be grown in any well-drained soil; it is particularly tolerant of poor, sandy soils and can withstand the full force of the sun.

Lemon Balm has effective sedative action and is typically made into a pleasant, lemony-tasting tea.

Try making a tea with 2 teaspoons of dried lemon balm per cup of boiling water. Steep the tea for 10 minutes, strain, and drink right before going to bed.

Passion Flower

Passion flower (*Passiflora incarnata*) is a flowering plant that is indigenous to an area from the southeast U.S. to Argentina and Brazil.

It gets its name from the fact that it reminded the early pilgrims of the suffering (or *passion*) of Christ.

Passion flower is sometimes referred to as Apricot Vine, Passion Vine, Granadilla, Maracoc and Maypops. It has been used historically as a tranquilizer and tobacco substitute (among other things).

In addition to having a profound effect on the central nervous system, passion flower also acts as an anti-spasmodic on the smooth muscles of the body, including the entirety of the digestion system, which accounts for its ability to ease and promote digestion.

It is considered by some to be the herb of choice for treating *intransigent insomnia*. Passion flower does not have any ill side effects and when used for insomnia results in a restful, relaxing sleep with no grogginess the next morning.

It is non-addictive and can be used in both children and the elderly without complication.

When used for its medicinal purposes, the entire plant can be used. It is typically collected after some of the berries have matured, then dried whole.

To brew an effective passion flower tea: pour a cup of boiling water onto a teaspoonful of the dried herb and let infuse for 15 minutes. Drink a cup half an hour before going to bed.

California poppy

California poppy (*Eschscholtzia californica*) contains the compound *protopine*, which has been described to be similar in effect to a lighter version of morphine.

Unlike its cousin, the Opium poppy, this flower does not contain the narcotic morphine, though its structure is similar.

Because of this, the California poppy does not have any of the addictive properties of its narcotic relative.

Due to the fact that there have been very few clinical studies of the effects of the California poppy, dosage guidelines have not been established.

Hops

Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) are fruit (or strobiles) of a member of the cannabis family native to Europe, Asia, and North America.

Hops are widely grown in the Pacific Northwest of the United States, and are a main ingredient in the flavoring of beer.

They are also commonly cultivated in Germany. Hops are typically used in conjunction with one of the above cited flowers and herbs.

It is commonly paired with chamomile, lavender or valerian, but also holds its own as a relaxing natural sedative. The dried strobiles, from which a tea can be made, are commonly available, as are tinctures, capsules, and tablets.

A very effective herbal sachet can be made incorporating hops as an ingredient.

To make one, use the same steps as used to construct the Lavender sachet demonstrated earlier in this book, but use the following as stuffing instead:

- 1/4 cup hops strobiles
- 1/8 cup chamomile flowers
- 1/8 cup lavender flowers

Sprinkle a few drops of lavender essential oil into the mixture before sewing it up for a wonderful aromatic sleepy time sachet. Place the sachet under your pillow for a night of soothing aromas.

Generally, no side effects or adverse drug interactions from the use of hops are generally reported, although some individuals have experienced a rare allergic reaction or contact dermatitis from the pollen crystals in the fruits (similar to the allergic reaction to lavender as covered in the lavender chapter).

Honey

Honey is said to have sleep inducing properties. Dark honey contains more antioxidants than light-colored honey. It can be used in herbal teas or mixed into warm milk.

Milk and Honey Sleep Remedy

Ingredients:

- 1 glass warm milk

- 1 drop vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon honey

Use this just before going to bed. Mix, then drink while it is still warm.

Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamin supplements may be used to provide you some relief from insomnia. This is particularly true if you are deficient in certain vitamins, amino acids, minerals, or enzymes that are necessary for healthy sleep.

Try adding one of the following nutritional supplements to your daily well-balanced diet:

- Calcium: When combined with food, calcium can have a sedative effect on your body. Calcium deficiencies in your body can cause wakefulness and restlessness. The recommended amount of calcium supplement per day is 600mg. It should be taken along with food and may be combined with a magnesium supplement
- Magnesium: Take a magnesium supplement of 250g each day. This can help induce sleep since a magnesium deficiency can cause nervousness which may prevent you from sleeping. Studies show that low levels of magnesium can lead to shallower sleep and cause you to wake more during the night. Try to add magnesium-rich foods to your diet. This includes wheat bran, almonds, cashews, blackstrap

molasses, and kelp.

- Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine): 50 to 100mg of Vitamin B6 per day can help prevent insomnia. Your body needs adequate B6 in order to produce serotonin which is required for the sleep-triggering hormone called melatonin. An excellent source of vitamin B6 is a tablespoon or two of nutritional yeast which can be stirred into a glass of fruit juice.
- Vitamin B12 (cobalamin): This is another important supplement in the cure for insomnia. If you are deficient in this vitamin you may experience confusion, loss of memory, and a general feeling of tiredness. The recommended daily dose is 25mg and can be combined with Vitamin B5. Good choices of Vitamin B12 and B5 can be found in walnuts, sunflower seeds, bananas, tuna, wheat germ, peanuts, and whole grains.
- Vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid): This vitamin is good for relieving stress and anxiety. Deficiency of B5 can cause sleep disturbances and fatigue. The daily recommended dose is 100 mg.
- Folic Acid: A deficiency of folic acid may be a contributing factor to insomnia. The recommended daily dose is 400 micrograms. Folic acid can be found naturally in orange juice, leafy green vegetables, fortified breakfast cereals, and beans. It should be noted that the synthetic form of folic acid found in over-the-counter vitamins is more easily used by your body than the natural product.
- Copper: Studies show that a low intake of copper in pre-menopausal

women may inhibit them from falling asleep quickly. The study showed that those women who received a 2mg copper supplement each day fell asleep faster and felt more rested in the morning. You are probably getting 1 mg of copper each day which wouldn't cause enough of a deficiency to cause any obvious symptoms but may be affecting the way that you sleep. Try to include more copper in your diet. Some of the best sources are cooked oysters and lobster.

If you eat a well-balanced diet you should find that you have no problem with vitamin deficiencies. You may want to add one or two of the above supplements to your diet for a short period of time to see if you notice a significant difference.

If you find that there is no noticeable improvement you may want to cease taking the supplement and concentrate on improving your eating and exercise habits.

Summary

The methods outlined in this book can help you achieve sleep filled, restful nights without resorting to dangerous narcotics and other drugs.

It's a good idea to try one or two of the methods at first, then add others as necessary to find a strategy that works for you. Choose a technique that appeals to you that you can begin immediately and stick with it.

In some cases you may need to be disciplined and determined if your

goal is to avoid the use of prescription medication. When you first start applying some of the techniques described here, stick to the same bedtime schedule for a week or two.

A good idea is to keep track of your sleeping habits using a sleep log to record bedtime, wake time and any details regarding your sleeping patterns and the techniques you have used to aid in the sleep process on any given night.

After you have observed how your body and your own specific metabolism have adjusted to your new treatments, you can begin modifying your routine to incorporate more or less of the methods described in this book as needed. Be sure to note adjustments to your treatment in your sleep log.

Remember, as with any health issue, never hesitate to consult your doctor if your symptoms raise concern for your overall health.

Your doctor can work with you to determine the best treatment for your case, including the natural remedies outlined in this book. The most important thing is your health.

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