

# 6 Ways you can Beat Insomnia Naturally

A good night's sleep is closer than you think.

When it comes to interrupted sleep, it's essential to be clear on the differences between insomnia and sleep deprivation.

"Insomnia is a real medical condition that prevents people from falling asleep, while sleep deprivation is the result of poor sleeping habits and lack of total sleeping hours," says Cheryl Fingleson, The Sleep Coach.

"There is no worse feeling than beginning your day like you're a cast member out of Michael Jackson's, Thriller music video. The knock-on effects like low energy, fatigue, decreased performance or mood swings can play havoc with your health and lifestyle.

"While no two sleepy individuals are the same, it's important to treat the root cause of the problem as well as begin developing good sleeping habits. Here's how to start."

## 1. Create a bedroom haven

Make sure your bedroom is free of clutter, rubbish or dirty clothes and, most importantly, free of electronics. Create a cosy haven where you'll enjoy lying in and can prepare yourself for a good night's sleep.

## 2. Acupressure or meditation

The whirlpool points at the back of the neck, where muscles attach to the base of the skull, can help you fall asleep. Clasp your hands and place them behind the head so that your thumbs reach downwards and

gently massage the left and right points in a circular motion for 30-60 seconds while inhaling and exhaling deeply.

Meditation can also help calm the sympathetic ('fight or flight') and induce the parasympathetic ('rest and digest') nervous system responses. A 10-15 minute meditation every morning and night will promote better sleeping habits in the long-term.

### 3. Bedtime snack

Peanut butter sandwiches, scrambled eggs, wholegrain cereal with low-fat milk, yoghurt topped with granola sprinkles, a low-fat milk banana smoothie or herbal teas are just some of the items you can have before bedtime to induce sleep. Foods that are rich in the amino acid tryptophan help the brain process sleep. Avoid caffeine or alcohol in the evenings if you have trouble sleeping.

### 4. Journaling

Writing before bedtime is a fantastic way of brain dumping the worries that kick your brain into overdrive, especially at night. Another excellent journal practice before bed is writing about the positive aspects of the day; this helps redirect the brain towards positivity so you're not staying up thinking about your problems. Make a habit of journaling 20 minutes before bedtime.

### 5. A boring book or sleep music

A dull or un-interesting book won't stimulate our brain the way a great novel would. With a lowly dim light, read in bed until your eyes fight to stay open. Enhance the process by playing soft sleep music in the background to help you on a deeper level. Strictly no kindles, tablets or mobiles for this one.

## 6. Consistency is key

Adults need seven-nine hours of sleep a night. Any less and you may be depriving your body of what it requires to function. We should be drowsy but awake when we head for bed, we do not want to fall asleep in front of the TV or on the lounge. Being drowsy is your body's cue that it's time to fall asleep.

I explain to my clients that it's important to create a bedtime routine or plan so that every night you follow precisely the same steps, such as reading or having a bath, before bed so that your body knows that it's time to go to sleep.