

Tips for Insomnia Treatment

Sleep hygiene: Ten basic rules for a good night's sleep:¹

1. Sleep only as much as you need to feel rested and then get out of bed
2. Keep a regular sleep schedule
3. Avoid forcing sleep
4. Exercise regularly for at least 20 minutes, preferably 4 to 5 hours before bedtime
5. Avoid caffeinated beverages after lunch
6. Avoid alcohol near bedtime: no “night cap”
7. Avoid smoking, especially in the evening
8. Do not go to bed hungry
9. Adjust bedroom environment
10. Deal with your worries before bedtime

Stimulus control therapy rules:²

1. Go to bed only when sleepy.
2. Do not watch television, read, eat, or worry while in bed. Use bed only for sleep and sex.
3. Get out of bed if unable to fall asleep within twenty minutes and go to another room.
4. Set an alarm clock to wake up at a fixed time each morning including weekends.
5. Do not take a nap during the day.

Sleep restriction rules:

1. Determine the patient's average sleep time from a sleep diary.
2. Use this average sleep time as the new time allowed in bed each night.
3. Set a consistent wake time based upon the type of insomnia and patient need.

References

1. Data from: Stepanski EJ, Wyatt JK. Use of sleep hygiene in the treatment of insomnia. *Sleep Med Rev* 2003; 7:215.
2. Data from: Bootzin, RR, Perlis, ML. Nonpharmacologic treatments of insomnia. *JClin Psychiatry* 1992; 53:37.