

Sleep Magic, Sleeping Soundly ...Naturally

SLEEP MAGIC

Sleeping Soundly...Naturally!



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Contents

<u>Introduction.....</u>	6
<u>Chapter 1: Bedtime Routine.....</u>	8
<u>Chapter 2: Room Conditions.....</u>	10
<u>Chapter 3: Comfort and Posture.....</u>	12
<u>Chapter 4: Chromatherapy.....</u>	14
<u>Chapter 5: Exercise.....</u>	16
<u>Chapter 6: Meditation.....</u>	18
<u>Chapter 7: Breathing and Relaxation Techniques.....</u>	20
<u>Chapter 8: Sleep Inducing Music and Sounds.....</u>	22
<u>Chapter 9: Reduce Nighttime/Evening Stimulation.....</u>	25
<u>Chapter 10: Avoid Stimulants.....</u>	27
<u>Chapter 11: Diet.....</u>	30
<u>Chapter 12: Reduce Worry/Anxiety.....</u>	32
<u>Chapter 13: Warm Bath and Drink.....</u>	34
<u>Chapter 14: Melatonin.....</u>	36
<u>Chapter 15: Chamomile.....</u>	38
<u>Chapter 16: Lavender.....</u>	40
<u>Chapter 17: Valerian Root.....</u>	43
<u>Chapter 18: Other Herbs.....</u>	45
<u>Chapter 19: Vitamins and Minerals.....</u>	49
<u>Chapter 20: Summary.....</u>	51
<u>Bonus Articles.....</u>	52

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!

Chapter 1: 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.

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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.

Chapter 2: 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.

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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.

Chapter 3: 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 untucked 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.

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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.

Chapter 4: 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.

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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.

Chapter 5: 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 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.

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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.

Chapter 6: 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.

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- 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.

Chapter 7: 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.

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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.

Chapter 8: 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.

Chapter 9: 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.

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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.

Chapter 10: 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.

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- 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

Chapter 11: 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.

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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.

Chapter 12: 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.

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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 feeling 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.

Chapter 13: Warm Bath And Drink

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.

Chapter 14: 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.

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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.

Chapter 15: 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.

Chapter 16: 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 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

Chapter 17: 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.

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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.

Chapter 18: 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.

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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.

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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.

Chapter 19: 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.

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- **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.

Chapter 20: 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.

**** Bonus Articles ****

We always believe in providing immense value to our readers. Hence we are adding several bonus articles that give you more information on this subject. Enjoy!

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A Sleep Disorder That Affects the Legs - Restless Sleep Syndrome

Restless leg syndrome, known as RLS, is a sleep disorder that afflicts more than 15 percent of adults.

It affects more women than men and the incidence of restless leg syndrome increases with age. Certain medical conditions, such as diabetes, arthritis and varicose veins, also increase the risk of developing restless leg syndrome.

This sleep disorder is characterized by an uncontrollable urge to move the lower legs, knees and occasionally the arms. Sometimes painful sensations accompany the urge to move. People that suffer from this sleep disorder describe the feelings and sensations in different ways. Many describe a tingling, itching or pulling sensation. Still others say it feels prickly or burns. Some feel as if they have worms crawling under their skin.

The sensations which are typical of this sleep disorder can occur anytime during the day or night.

Restless leg syndrome occurring at night has a devastating effect on sleep. The symptoms can cause the sufferer to get in and out of bed repeatedly which can delay or disrupt sleep. Since sleep is repeatedly interrupted, extreme daytime sleepiness is common.

The combination of always feeling tired and the symptoms themselves can cause a person with restless leg syndrome to alter their lifestyle. Long trips, movies, concerts and eating in restaurants are some of the activities they usually avoid. Attending a long meeting at work can become very painful and uncomfortable. People that have this sleep disorder often suffer from depression.

Researchers believe that restless leg syndrome may be caused by malfunctions of the pathways in the brain that controls movement reflexes and sensations. Often this sleep disorder has a genetic base.

Restless leg syndrome cannot be diagnosed by one single test. Often standard neurological examinations show no signs of an abnormality. In many cases, a doctor makes the diagnosis of restless leg syndrome based on the description of the symptoms. They also take into account family history, and the results of a routine medical examination and blood tests.

Many times the treatment for restless leg syndrome is aimed at controlling the debilitating sensations that accompany this sleep disorder. Often iron supplements are prescribed because severe anemia has been linked to this disorder. Relaxation techniques, diet changes and the elimination of caffeine and alcohol help some sufferers of restless leg syndrome.

In most cases, this sleep disorder is treated with drugs. These drugs could include dopamine agents, benzodiazepines, opioids or anticonvulsants. Medications do not cure restless leg syndrome, but they manage the symptoms. People that suffer from this sleep disorder usually have to stay on their medications for the rest of their lives.

Another sleep disorder similar to restless leg syndrome is periodic limb movement disorder known as PLMD. There are two main differences between restless leg syndrome and periodic limb movement disorder. Restless leg syndrome occurs when the sufferer is awake or asleep; periodic limb movement disorder only occurs when the sufferer is asleep. Restless leg syndrome movements are voluntary responses to very unpleasant sensations; the movements of periodic limb movement disorder are involuntary and are not consciously controlled. Both of these sleep disorders can be effectively controlled with medical treatment.

An Alternative Approach for Overcoming a Sleep Disorder

Having a sleep disorder can be very disruptive to everyday life. Sleep deprived people are usually excessively tired and sleepy. They tend to become irritable and very emotional. At times they become a danger, not only to themselves, but also to those around them.

Some people use alternative, natural ways to lessen the effects of their sleep disorder. Many people focus on diet and nutrition, while others use herbs and supplements. Still others believe in the positive effect of exercise, relaxation and sensory techniques, meditation or behavioral and cognitive strategies. Often people use a combination of these approaches to help alleviate the symptoms of their sleep disorder.

A healthy diet is essential for optimal energy and a restful sleep. Avoiding certain foods is as important as including others in your daily diet. Eating a wide variety of foods and drinking plenty of water will keep your body well- balanced and provide a more stable energy level. Avoiding food that is grown, treated or processed with chemicals, and limiting the amount of sugar and caffeine will also help your overall physical condition. Many foods promote a restful sleep and are helpful in relieving some of the symptoms of certain sleep disorders. Eating the proper snack before bedtime can increase natural serotonin levels. Serotonin acts as a natural sedative and is made in the body from the amino acid tryptophan. Foods that are rich in tryptophan include chicken, turkey, cheese, cottage cheese, fish, milk, nuts, avocados and bananas.

Many people use herbs and natural supplements as an alternative approach to treating their sleep disorder. There are many nutritional supplements and herbal products on the market. It is important to know how a specific product acts on the body as well as on the specific sleep disorder.. For example many people with restless leg syndrome have an iron or folic acid deficiency. Taking an iron supplement may alleviate some of the symptoms of RLS. Many herbs are well known for promoting a natural sleep. A calming tea of chamomile or lemon balm can be very relaxing to many people that suffer from a sleep disorder.

Sleep Magic – Sleeping Soundly ... Naturally!

Exercise and relaxation techniques, whether used alone or together, can reduce stress and muscle tension. Many people that use these techniques to lessen the symptoms of a sleep disorder do these before going to bed. They not only ease physical tension but they calm the mind and prepare the body to sleep. These techniques include mindful exercise, progressive muscle relaxation, breathing exercises and yoga.

Meditation and visualization are also used by some sufferers of sleep disorders to calm the body before sleep. Two common forms of mediation are meditation on the breath and mantra meditation. Both of these types can have a positive effect on relieving stress and calming the body. Many people focus their energy on a healing visualization as a method of alternative therapy for their sleep disorder.

Sensory techniques that people use to lessen the symptoms of their sleep disorder are hydrotherapy, and aroma therapy. The two main techniques included in hydrotherapy, which means water therapy, are relaxing in an Epsom salt bath and a lymph stimulating footbath. Aroma therapy includes the use of therapeutic essential oils in baths, massage oils, room sprays, and simple inhalants.

Alternative behavioral and cognitive strategies used to combat the symptoms of a sleep disorder include improving a person's sleep hygiene, stimulus control therapy and journal writing.

Alternative practices and techniques can help many types of sleep disorders. Often they are used in conjunction with traditional medication and practices.

Children With the Sleep Disorder of Sleepwalking

The sleep disorder of sleepwalking, also known as somnambulism, affects approximately 14% of school-age children between five and twelve years old at least once. Approximately one quarter of the children with this sleep disorder have more frequent episodes. Sleepwalking is more common in boys than it is in girls. Most children that sleepwalk outgrow the symptoms of this sleep disorder by adolescence as their nervous systems develop.

In children this sleep disorder is thought to be the result of the immaturity of the brain's sleep / wake cycle. Normally the entire brain wakes up at the same time. However, in the case of a sleepwalker, the entire brain does not wake up together. The portion that is responsible for mobility wakes up while the portion responsible for cognition and awareness stays asleep. The child is actually in a deep state of sleep.

With this sleep disorder the brain remains partially asleep but the body is able to move. It is common for the sleepwalker to get out of bed and walk around. Sometimes they get dressed or go outside. Even though the sleepwalker's eyes are open and they see what they are doing, their expression remains blank. They do not respond to conversation or their name being called. A sleepwalker's movements usually appear clumsy. It is not uncommon for them to trip over furniture or knock over things as they move around. A sleepwalking episode usually happens one to two hours after the child goes to sleep. Most of these episodes last for fifteen minutes or less, but some can last for an hour or more.

This sleep disorder in children is usually outgrown and treatment is not generally necessary. In most cases, a parent gently guiding the child back to bed is all that is needed. There is not any need to wake the child.

However, there is about 1% of the population that sleepwalk as adults. Adults that have this sleep disorder did not necessarily have it as a child. In adults a sleepwalking episode can be triggered by stress, anxiety, sleep fragmentation, sleep deprivation, or certain medical conditions such as epilepsy.

Treatment for adults with this sleep disorder is often dependent upon the amount of danger they are in during an episode. For example, a sleepwalker who opens doors and goes outside onto a

busy city street is in danger. A sleepwalker that gets up and goes into the living room and sits down on a chair most likely is not in danger. Treatments can include behavioral therapies, self hypnosis, or prescription medication.

A sleepwalker, whether adult or child, needs to have a safe area so that they do not get hurt during an episode. Precautions can be taken to eliminate some dangers. Parents should make sure the child's bedroom does not have any sharp or breakable objects. Doors should be locked at night to keep the sleepwalker from going outside. Sometimes it is necessary to put bells on doors to alert the sleeping parent that their child is sleepwalking. Large glass windows and doors should be covered with heavy drapery to lessen the chance of having the sleepwalker walk through it while it is closed.

A child with the sleep disorder of somnambulism needs to be protected and kept safe during an episode. It is the environment they are in that is the danger more than the sleep disorder itself.

Fatal Familial Insomnia

This is probably by far one of the rarest forms of sleeping disorders around. This is an inherited disorder that has only been found in 28 families in the world that have the dominant gene for it. The offspring of a parent(s) of developing the disorder is about 50% and there is no cure for this. The age of onset is around the ages between 30 and 60 and the disorder's time frame runs between 7 to 18 months. This disease has 4 stages that it goes through and 1st stage of the disease starts off with the sufferer dealing with increased insomnia leading to severe panic attacks, and various kinds of phobias, this stage lasts about 4 months, 2nd stage sufferer deals with hallucinations and panic attacks become more obvious and lasts about 5 months, 3rd stage Complete and total inability to sleep. And follows with drastic weight loss and lasts about 3 months, 4th stage Dementia sets in and progressively becoming irresponsive and mute over a course of 6 months and this is the final progression of the disease.

This sounds a lot like Alzheimer's because if you notice the time frame it's a lot less shorter than the actual time span of someone who deals with Alzheimer's because the sufferer is dealing with it for several years instead of a year where the disease progressively degenerates the mental capacity to such a degree that the sufferer has a hard time with memory.

As far as treatment is concerned sleeping pills don't have any effect for people suffering from Fatal Familial Insomnia and not even non-medicinal therapy doesn't work either. Medical science has no idea why it's a fatal disease and how they can create effective treatment options to combat this problem. And more effective genetic testing for diseases that are inherited to find out what can be done medicinally and therapeutically to deal with this sleeping disorder.

It's a matter of how much attention the medical world takes note of this and pushes the funding to finding a cure and effective genetic testing of families and tracking diseases through the generations to be able to have some kind of record of the disease passing down through generations or skipping generations which is what some diseases have done in some families for those who have a disposition for certain things.

This doesn't get nearly as much attention as all the other sleeping disorders because of it being rare, and only turning up in so many people and births making it not rare enough for it to get the recognition as regular insomnia and to qualify for the treatments. That are currently out there to help those 60 million people who are dealing with some kind of sleeping disorder(s).

With the way medical science is going it will be a matter of time before medical science catches up and helps the many people who are looking for a cure of being deprived of a restful night's sleep. The moment a cure is found is one more person who will be helped to have a good night's rest.

How to Tell If You Have a Sleep Disorder

There are many people that have an undiagnosed sleep disorder. They may feel very sleepy during the day. They may have trouble falling to sleep or staying asleep. Friends or relatives may tell them they look very tired. They may experience mood changes, irritability or become overly emotional. Often they have difficulty paying attention, concentrating, or remembering things that are important. These are all symptoms of sleep deprivation, and possibly of a sleep disorder.

A person that has an undiagnosed sleep disorder will usually answer the question, "What is the problem with your sleep," with one of five answers. Those answers will be; "I have trouble falling asleep," "I have trouble staying awake," "I can't get up in the morning," "I seem to do strange things in my sleep" or "I can't sleep because of my partner." The particular answer chosen helps to narrow down the possibility of a specific type of sleep disorder.

When someone says "I can't fall asleep" it can mean several things. There could be a problem when first going to bed, after waking up in the middle of the night, or in the early morning hours. Many people have the problem of not being able to fall asleep when they go to bed. This is called sleep latency. Sleep latency can be a very serious symptom of certain sleep disorders, including sleep onset insomnia, delayed sleep phase disorder, shift work, restless leg syndrome or paradoxical insomnia. Many times the problem is not being able to stay asleep, which is sleep fragmentation. Often a person with this complaint can fall to sleep easily when they go to bed, but wake up often throughout the night. Sleep disorders may include sleep maintenance insomnia, shift work. If a person wakes up very early in the morning and cannot get back to sleep, it could be a sign of advanced sleep phase disorder or sleep maintenance insomnia.

If the answer to the question is "I can't stay awake" and the person is falling asleep at inappropriate times there may be a sleep disorder such as narcolepsy, obstructive or central sleep apnea, periodic limb movement disorder, restless leg syndrome, shift work or advanced sleep phase disorder.

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Those that say "I can't get up in the morning" and take an hour or more to fully wake from their sleep may suffer from excessive sleep inertia. They are having difficulty making the transition from sleep to being awake. Sleep disorders that could be responsible for excessive sleep inertia are sleep apnea and delayed sleep phase disorder.

A person that answers the question with "I do strange things in my sleep" may find that their sleep is full of surprises. Sleepwalking, Sleep terrors, confusional arousals, REM sleep behavior disorder, nightmares, sleep-related eating disorder and bruxism are all types of sleep disorders known as parasomnias.

If a person answers "I can't sleep because of my partner" snoring, sleep apnea, bruxism, restless leg syndrome, or periodic limb movement disorder may be the sleep disorder to blame.

How would you answer the question of "What is the problem with your sleep?"

Hypersomnia (oversleeping)

Most people don't realize they oversleep when they have a condition called hypersomnia and that's due in part to recurring episodes of excessive daytime sleeping and prolonged nighttime sleep. This is different from the average person taking that midday nap when they do it at sometimes the most inappropriate times like at work, during meals, or even in conversation with people.

Hypersomniacs are also diagnosed with narcolepsy, which can be quite dangerous because some individuals are behind the wheel of cars or even cooking in their home and aren't aware that they fell asleep. Some hypersomniacs and narcoleptics can fall asleep and then wake up and resume where they left off in conversations with people. Usually daytime naps usually provide no relief or symptoms to the problem(s) and will result in the individual(s) having increased difficulty in waking from a long extended period of sleeping, disorientation, anxiety, decreased energy, increased fatigue, restlessness, slow thinking, slow speech, loss of appetite, hallucinations, and problems with memory functions.

Some individuals also experience losing the ability to function in normal family, social, occupational, and other settings familiar to that person.

Hypersomnia can be triggered by sleep apnea or narcolepsy, where it can lead to dysfunction of the autonomic nerve system, which can be brought on, by acute alcohol and/or drug abuse. In some cases rare or not it can also be triggered from physical problems such as tumors, head trauma or injuries to the nervous system. Specific medications or withdrawal of medications and/or drugs may contribute to someone having hypersomnia. Medical conditions such as multiple sclerosis, depression, encephalitis, epilepsy, and obesity can contribute to hypersomnia as well.

It's also been noted that those who have hypersomnia are also genetically dispositioned to this problem whereas in others there's no known or documented cause. Hypersomnia typically affects adolescents and young adults in their 20s and 30s. Although the most common causes

of this disorder differs in the age brackets. Information can be located on the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes website if you're seeking a more thorough clinical explanation to this problem. This isn't a substitute for medical advice from a licensed physician so it's ideal to educate yourself, but leave the diagnosing and treatment to a doctor so that your condition can be monitored closely.

People who are not seeing a doctor when they identify problems that are not normal for them to experience are misdiagnosing too many issues with sleep. Persons who are severely obese can also have a difficult time losing the weight because of the fact that lack of sleep can increase the body's metabolic rate, which can trigger excessive hunger in those who are trying to lose weight.

This is why so many people who are obese are eating more than they should because a lot of them sleep so much that they wake up wanting to eat when they should be sleeping like normal people do and not up at all hours of the night wanting to eat. This is why it's harder for people who are obese to lose weight when they sleep too much and not training their body to rest instead of wanting to eat food.

Illnesses That Can Cause a Sleep Disorder

Many times a sleep disorder can be caused from an illness or from the medications used to treat an illness. Some of the common health conditions that can cause a sleeping problem are cardiovascular disease, endocrine disorders, neurological disorders, respiratory disease, mental illness, gastroesophageal reflux disease, kidney disease, and arthritis.

Cardiovascular disease includes congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease. These are the two most common heart problems that affect sleep and can cause a sleep disorder. Congestive heart failure occurs when the heart can no longer pump enough blood of the body's needs. Blood backs up in the veins of the heart which lead to the kidneys and edema eventually damages the lungs and other organs. People suffering from congestive heart failure have a very high risk of developing the sleep disorder of obstructive sleep apnea. Coronary heart disease is the build up of fatty deposits in the arteries that supply blood to the heart, called atherosclerosis. This condition also can lead to obstructive sleep apnea.

Sleep disorders can occur from endocrine disorders such as diabetes and thyroid disease. Diabetes is a disease that affects the way the body processes and uses carbohydrates, fats and proteins. People that have uncontrolled diabetes often develop the sleep disorder of restless leg syndrome. Thyroid hormones regulate the body's energy levels. Hyperthyroidism can make it difficult to fall asleep, and cause night sweats the person to wake.

Neurological disorders include Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy, and strokes. Parkinson's disease is a central nervous system disorder. This disease causes problems with body motion, including tremors, unstable posture, slowed body movements, muscle stiffness, and difficulty walking. Sleep disorders that occur with this disease include REM sleep behavior disorder and sleep onset insomnia. Alzheimer's disease impairs the brain's intellectual functions and is the most common cause of dementia. This disease causes sleep fragmentation. Epilepsy causes recurrent, sudden, brief changes in the normal electrical activity of the brain. People with this condition are twice as likely to suffer from the sleep disorder insomnia. People that suffer a stroke usually also have obstructive sleep apnea.

People that have respiratory diseases, such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease,

usually also have a sleep disorder. Asthma is a chronic lung condition that makes breathing difficult when air passages become inflamed and narrow. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, known as COPD, refers to a group of disorders that damage the lungs and make breathing difficult. Many people with these conditions suffer from insomnia and sleep fragmentation.

Mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and seasonal affective disorder can also lead to a sleep disorder. People with these mental health disorders often suffer from sleep fragmentation and insomnia.

Gastroesophageal reflux disease, known as GERD, causes the stomach's juices to flow backwards into the esophagus. This causes the sleep disorder of sleep fragmentation.

Kidney disease causes the kidneys to lose their ability to filter the proper amount of waste products from the blood and regulate the body's balance of salt and water. This can cause the sleep disorders of restless leg syndrome and insomnia to develop.

People with arthritis often find it difficult to fall asleep because of the pain. This often results in insomnia.

If an illness causes a sleep disorder to develop, the sleep disorder is secondary to the illness. Successful treatment of the primary underlying cause will usually diminish the effects of the sleep disorder.

Insomnia - The Most Prevalent Form of Sleep Disorder

Insomnia, a most common sleep disorder, affects about one third of the American population and is classified two different ways. It can be classified by how long it lasts. Transient insomnia lasts for only a few days, short term lasts for a few weeks and chronic lasts for more than three weeks. The other way insomnia is classified is by its source. The main two classifications of this sleep disorder by source are primary and secondary.

Transient insomnia is experienced by most people at some time throughout their lives. It can be caused by stress such as worrying about the first day school or an illness in the family. Sometimes this sleep disorder occurs due to a disruption of their circadian cycle, which is a persons natural sleep cycle, caused by jet lag or a shift change at work. Transient insomnia goes away once the stress issue has passed. Short term insomnia is often caused by similar stressors as transient insomnia. If the sufferer of this sleep disorder cannot break the cycle of poor sleep, it often develops into chronic insomnia.

Primary insomnia develops without any obvious cause. Sometimes it starts as early as infancy. Often it is the result of high metabolic rates or an overactive nervous system.

Secondary insomnia is the direct result of another cause. This sleep disorder can come from illness, medication, drugs or alcohol. Addressing the underlying cause of secondary insomnia often gives the sufferer relief. For example, if arthritis pain keeps you from sleeping, then treating the arthritis is the best way to cope with the sleep disorder.

Insomnia is not a single disorder. It is a general symptom and could have many potential causes. In order to qualify as a sleep disorder, insomnia has to meet three specific requirements. First, the person has to experience poor sleep in general, or have a problem falling or staying asleep. Second, if given the proper sleep environment and an adequate opportunity to sleep, the problem still occurs. Third, the result of the poor sleep causes some type of impairment while awake. Examples of impairment are; fatigue, body aches and pains, inability to concentrate, mood changes, lack of energy, poor concentration, or developing an unnatural amount of worry about sleep.

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Often insomnia is treated with medication, such as sleeping pills. These can be prescription medication or bought over the counter.

However, there are several other methods of treatment for this sleep disorder. Behavioral treatments include meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, visualization, biofeedback, sleep hygiene, cognitive behavioral therapy and reconditioning sleep restriction. These methods are often very successful.

Some sufferers of this sleep disorder choose holistic, or alternative, treatment. This method involves the use of herbal supplements which are not usually FDA approved. Others seek acupuncture as a way to relieve their insomnia. Passive body heating, which is the use of hot baths, is another method used.

Understanding this sleep disorder is the first step to breaking the cycle of insomnia.

Insomnia in popular culture

Insomnia has been a featured disorder from many factors such as books and movies. Two cult classics one is a book titled *Insomnia* written by horror novelist Stephen King and the other is the Robert DeNiro film from 1976 *Taxi Driver*. There have been 28 songs written and recorded about insomnia and among the artists who recorded a song were Vanessa Carlton, Green Day, Radiohead, and Tenacious D. The most popular film based on the Chuck Palahniuk novel that was a hit about 6 years ago was *Fight Club* with Edward Norton and Brad Pitt and the lead character was manic insomniac. This seems to be the most common form of sleeping disorder to the point that movies and songs were made about this problem.

People aren't aware that this is a problematic issue for those who suffer from this. It's not healthy to go without sleep because it can affect your immune system making you prone to catching things like the flu and colds. Not getting any rest can cause severe disorientation because your body wasn't given an opportunity to rest and recuperate.

This is what drove the designer coffee movement up like the sprawl of coffee shops from Starbucks, Gloria Jeans, Seattle's Best, and Caribou Coffee since you had a lot of late nighters consisting of mainly people working in hospitals and college students who had to pull late nighters and cram sessions and needed to stay awake so when coffee wasn't working they bought this over the counter pill called Vivarin which is equal to about 2 cups of coffee when you take the prescribed dosage.

It's usually not a good idea to take Vivarin because it can interfere with your body's ability to sleep and rest normally. You'll find more college students getting sick a lot because they're forcing their bodies to do things that isn't normal like staying up super late and not getting at least 6 hours of sleep. Rest also provides your body's digestive system to rest which makes up about 70% of your immune system so it's ideal to sleep when necessary and taking short naps also work as a re-energizer to give you a burst of energy that works much better than coffee or caffeine pills.

That can become resistant since a lot of coffee drinkers tend to get very tired after a certain point and that's due in part to the fact that you build up a resistance after having a few cups of coffee or cans of Coke so meaning it won't keep you awake it will accelerate the rate of how fast you'll start to feel sleepy.

So seeing pop culture idolize such a disorder is unknown unless the person who wrote the book or penned the song has a problem with it and decided to write or sing about it. The reason for it is unknown, but it's rather interesting since a song can tell a story and the same of a book, but it's obviously influenced a slew of songs, a few movies and a series of books where the characters are suffering from some kind of sleeping disorder from mild to severe.

Insomnia

When you think of insomnia you're thinking of someone who can't sleep for a reasonable amount of time. A typical complaint from an insomniac is not being able to close their eyes or rest their mind for over a few minutes at a time. There are many reasons for this ranging from anxiety to bipolar disorder. Yet sometimes there's no real causes and can just happen for any given reason, but too much activity and physical pain can be causes for someone not to be sleeping at night.

Finding the underlying causes is key to finding a cure for this problem. It's also been found that not eating has contributed to someone not sleeping. There are 3 types of insomnia and they are transient insomnia which lasts anywhere from a single night to several weeks, acute insomnia is the inability to sleep well for a single period of 3 weeks to up to 6 months, and chronic is deemed the most serious where it's happening nightly for at least a month or longer.

There are options to treat insomnia the most common is medicinal since there's commercials on for Ambien, Ambien CR (Controlled Release) , Rozerem, and Lunesta prescribed for people dealing with sleeping disorders.

It seems in this day and age that sleeping disorders are becoming more common and prevalent because with the new line of sleeping pills coming out explains clearly shows that there is an increase of sleeping disorders of many variations. Some of the medications out there that's used in treatment of insomnia have proven that it was effective in helping insomniacs wake and sleep at the right time, but it lacks the data information to prove the theory as truth and factual. Lunesta and Ambien are noted to having a high psychological dependence than the older brands of sleeping pills and now cognitive behavior therapy is one of the many options widely used in someone dealing with insomnia and using the medication Rozerem because of the likelihood of getting hooked to the drug is reduced and is widely prescribed for people who have a history of overusing their medications.

Some insomniacs have used herbs like chamomile when drunk in tea and lavender for aromatherapy as a means to relax. Insomnia can also result in a deficiency of magnesium and getting the right amount has proven to improve the quality of a person's sleeping patterns.

Pomegranates are also good for insomniacs since there's a nutrient in the fruit key for everything from immunity to cardiovascular health and are good for improving sleep. Insomniacs are also advised to eliminate a lot of the stress and tension in their lives because this is a triggering problem in the everyday life on an insomniac. Chinese medicine has also been introduced into helping those with sleeping disorders and other issues surrounding that. According to statistics taken from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services it's estimated that 60 million Americans suffer from some type of insomnia and is noted to increase with age. 40% of women and 30% of men suffer from this.

Women tend to deal with this more because of increased level of responsibilities in their lives since more and more households in the United States are becoming single run homes and 75% of women are the heads of them which makes them the sole bread winners and taking on the role of mother and father which makes their lives increasingly difficult when they don't have a partner or spouse to give them the support they need.

Jet Lag Syndrome

This is the second most popular sleep disorder and usually affects international flights and if it's domestic if they're going between time zones. This is what you call knocking your body clock out of synch because when you're traveling across different time zones especially at the international level because that can throw you off an entire day if you're coming from the west going east from New York to London or Los Angeles to Tokyo or Sydney which can throw you off since you cross the international date line which is one day ahead and behind.

It seems as if women are more affected than men and according to medical reports it's because the natural hormone estrogen and it's triggered when the body when accustomed to normal daytime and nighttime rhythms therefore you're upsetting the body's natural state of corresponding with a specific time of day and it can even interrupt eating patterns as well. It can take up to several days to even a full week to regain some normalcy on the time and place once you've had time to sleep yourself into adjustment mode.

The symptoms of jet lag vary by the individual person and symptoms can include or be a combination of dehydration which can trigger minor disorientation, and loss of appetite, headaches and sinus irritations, fatigue, grogginess, nausea and/or vomiting from an upset stomach, irritability, and mild depression. Jet lag is not linked to the length of a flight, but the transmeridian distance traveled. For example if you flew from New York and Los Angeles which is approximately 5 hours you will feel some jet lag crossing the Central and Mountain time zones. Jet lag can be extremely difficult in places like Alaska and Russia because of the fact that Alaska only sees a short amount of daylight and Russia has 11 different time zones and can really throw someone off if they were flying from Copenhagen to Tokyo.

Usually people that are prone to this are often given sedatives by their doctors to help them sleep through the flight and to wake up without the effects of jet lag when they land in their destination.

Ways to recover quicker from jet lag is proper nutrition, exercise, and sleep because you'll be surprised to know that people who don't sleep or get enough rest and relaxation will deal with it later when they land and the disorientation sets in. Sunlight according to doctors say can help reset your body's clock back in synch.

It's difficult to pinpoint the severity of jet lag because it affects people differently and usually people who travel on international flights are less likely to deal with jet lag because they're used to the constant change. And have manage to adapt to those changes since some travel monthly for business and usually it's business travelers who deal with jet lag more than those who go for vacations.

Business travelers fly at odd times which can throw someone off because they're flying out super early or catching the red eye somewhere to arrive the next day.

Snoring Cure - 9 Simple Ways To Effectively Cure Snoring

Summary: Do you snore or are you irritated because the person who sleeps next to you snores? Here are some simple cures.

You might find people who snore funny, but you just won't feel the same way when the person you sleep with snores into your ear every night. It in fact will annoy you. This is the driving force behind curing snoring.

The following are some methods to control or if possible cure snoring:

1. Respiratory Exercises: Snoring is mainly caused by blocks in the breathing passage like the nose and throat due to nose blockades, wrongly position jaws or an over-strained throat. To resume normal breathing, take many deep breaths to relax the muscles of your throat

2. Decongestants: Nasal congestion can also cause snoring. Since the nose is blocked, the person may try to breathe through the mouth leading to snoring. To clear these blockades, take decongestants.

3. Anti-allergy medications: Enlargement of adenoids might have been cause by allergy to some drug previously prescribed. Once a person gets over the allergy, snoring stops.

4. Healthy diet and exercise: Most obese people snore. This is not just a coincidence. The concentration of fat in the air passage, limits air from flowing freely in and out. The proper functioning of the diaphragm is also hindered by fat accumulation in the stomach resulting in snoring. 4 in 10 obese people are known to snore. Good exercise and a healthy diet will not alone help them overcome snoring, but will also benefit them in numerous ways.

5. Change your bed position: Sleeping in the wrong position may also induce snoring. For example, you might stretch your neck too much by using too many pillows. Using a single pillow can avoid this. Lying on your back may also cause snoring.

6. Lifestyle change: Intake of alcohol and snoring may directly or indirectly induce snoring. For example, certain medical complications caused by drinking might have caused snoring. To

maintain good health, it is therefore advisable to quit alcohol and smoking. This also improves all-round health and mental peace.

7. Medication: Sleeping pills, antihistamines, certain other medicines can cause an increase in snoring.

8. Sleep Pattern: Basically, there are two periods of sleep, the REM sleep and stage 1 sleep. A person dreams constantly in REM sleep and experiences deep sleep often. Stage1 sleep will be experienced while sleeping or if a person sleeps poorly. Both these can lead to unstable breathing which in turn causes snoring. If you don't sleep at around the same time everyday, the irregularity may cause instability in respiration and thus cause unstable breathing when you sleep.

9. Salt water nasal drops: Congestion in the nose may be caused by mucus and this can both spoil your sleep and also cause snoring. If you want to avoid this, purchase a small bottle of salt water nasal drops at any drugstore in your neighborhood. These help flush down the mucus. If you are not willing to buy a bottle, these nasal drops can be made right at home by dissolving a teaspoon of salt in roughly 250 ml of water. Once this water cools to the natural temperature of the body, put a dropper in it and use it.

If any other serious condition like sleep apnea or enlargement of tonsils and/or adenoids, surgical procedures such as Laser Assisted Uvula Palatopathy commonly abbreviated as LAUP and somnoplasty or radio frequency tissue ablation can be undertaken. This is more than sufficient proof that the root cause of snoring must be determined prior to taking action.

Leave Snoring Behind - The Herbal way

Summary: Tried every snoring cure in the market and still snore? Try the "green way" and live a happy snore-free life.

Many new drugs have come out into the mainstream market which claim to reduce drastically if not completely cure snoring. For those few for whom all these medicines have failed, doctors suggest surgery as the drastic last resort.

But what do you do, if you thoroughly dislike medicines and are scared of the knife. Are you doomed to be the laughing stock for snoring for the rest of your life?

This can probably drive you nuts if you were unaware that herbs are very effective in curing snoring. No. This is not a mere sales gimmick. You can stop snoring through herbal cures.

Of the various methods to prevent or completely stop snoring that are out there today, you must agree that natural supplements are much safer than drugs which are normally prescribed.

Please note that natural is not synonymous with without recommendation. There are certain natural substances that can hamper the course of action of other drugs and need to be avoided since they can be intoxicating.

Advice of a medical expert must be sought before administering any of these supplements. Else, conduct researches yourself.

This is more strongly advised if you are already under medication or are allergic to certain things that can be triggered by these supplements.

Much like their artificial counterparts, even herbal drugs must be taken only in carefully prescribed doses.

There are people who have an aversion to taking artificial medicines and believe that natural supplements are the way to go to gracefully treat the human body.

Sleep Magic – Sleeping Soundly ... Naturally!

It is because of this that knowledge of natural alternatives to cure snoring is sought after. A large portion of people will prefer it over even medicines that are readily available in the market and have natural ingredients.

Aromapathy is another well-known cure for snoring. This method uses certain oils to relax the airway. The anti-inflammatory action of these oils is taken advantage of here. You may also use these oils through sprays or mouth rinses.

Though this method is simple, it is strongly discouraged for people with asthma or any previous breathing problems. Avoid contact with eyes. Consult a doctor immediately if it accidentally falls into the eyes.

Herbal supplements packaged in the form of tablets are also widely used. These help clearing mucus in the throat and helps relaxing the air pipe. Mucous causes blocking of the insides of the throat which is normally ignored by the person who snores. This produces a contraction of the windpipe which further leads to snoring. These tablets help alleviate these problems.

Hungry for more information on this interesting cure? Search engines can be your friend and guide in this venture. Search for then with apt keywords like "Herbal snoring cure" or "Natural cure for snoring" to find millions of pages on the topic.

A homeopathic professional is best suited to suggest what you can take and what you must avoid.

There are thousands of success stories where people have successfully overcome snoring. Try it yourself and join them.

A word of caution: What may suit others may not suit you. One man's food is another's poison.

Remedies for snoring - Do-it-yourself

Summary: Want cheap but effective cures to snoring. Cook them up yourselves at your own home.

Are you one of those who experience sleepless nights because your partner snores non-stop? Or are you the person who is snoring and wants to get over it, the cost-effective way? Get that odd noise out of your household today. Here are some simple cures for snoring.

To find a cure for snoring, we need to zero down on its cause. Research shows that snoring or stertor as it is medically referred to is caused by air vibration when it is forced through a small gap inside the throat which is stuffed.

Did you wonder why we tend to snore only when we are sleeping? When we sleep, our upper airway muscles relax and they wilt inward. This makes passage of air through the wind pipe tougher and hence apnea (stoppage of breathing of small instants) occurs which leads to snoring.

When apnea occurs, there is an increase in Carbon dioxide levels in the body. In response to this, the heart rate gets affected and our blood vessels get narrowed. Thus the more time for which these muscles relax, the more the people snore.

There are people who do not realize that they are snoring. They toss and turn and wake up tired losing good quality sleep. Some people, when half-awake, even hear themselves snoring. Obesity, smoking, drinking, tonsillitis, sinusitis, common cold may all lead to snoring.

Snoring is closely linked to overweight people. This is because there is fat concentration on the airways that limits the air to go in and out freely. Losing weight will greatly help these people to stop snoring.

Consume healthy food and exercise everyday. Though it may seem unrelated, exercising is found to be very effective in getting rid of snoring. A relaxed jaw can work wonders in reducing snoring.

If you do smoke or drink, reduce their frequency. By minimizing consumption of alcohol during the night, you can overcome snoring and you will also experience a complete improvement in health. Research shows that bad sleeping positions can cause snoring. Lying on your back may cause snoring. So lying on your stomach or to your sides may help you overcome snoring.

Soreness of the upper respiratory tract, Nose blocks and tonsillitis are the chief causes of snoring in young children. Children, and even adults for that matter, tend to breathe with their mouth when their nose is blocked. This as expected leads to snoring. So if you started snoring because of cold, the snoring will also go away when you are rid of cold. That is it. Cure snoring through the above means. Curing it is necessary since it reflects on our mood and our relationship with others.

Though these remedies may cure the woes of most of those who snore, they are not a panacea. They can most certainly reduce snoring, but it may not completely cure it. Medicines or sprays that are get at pharmacies to cure snoring are too at times ineffective. So it is better to take these home-remedies and not have anything to lose.

Snoring - Its Nature, Cause And Cure

Summary: There are many ill effects of snoring. But by identifying the causes, we can cure snoring.

Ever since a pioneer invented a device for curing snoring by attaching a sock with a tennis ball to the back of a shirt to prevent him/her from lying on the back, hundreds of other inventions have been made in the same field. These devices, sadly, initiate a very unpleasant stimulus every time you snore or do anything that can trigger snoring. Snoring is not a voluntary action. So if a device does keep you from snoring, it might also keep you awake all night.

Abnormality of the air passage is the root cause of snoring. When free flow of air which is required for normal breathing is hindered by some problem, it is highly likely that air strikes the back of the nose and mouth continuously. This vibration comes out as snoring.

Many people take snoring lightly imagining that it will not cause any harm. Contrary to this, people who suffer from snoring may in the long run, have serious health problems like obstructive sleep apnea. Apart from this, they cannot get a good night's rest and thus are deprived of complete rest. Also, it may embarrass the person and also disturb his/her spouse/bedmate.

Obstructive sleep apnea is a condition where snoring is interspersed with instants where the person completely stops breathing. These instances may occur for 10 seconds each unto 10 times each hour. Thus the sufferer may have 30 to 300 such episodes in a single night.

These reduce the oxygen levels in our blood and causes the heart to pump harder than normal.

A person is forced to sleep only lightly so that he can keep his muscles taut. Only this can regulate normal flow of air in a person's air pipe. This unrelaxed rest is not sufficient for the human body. This makes him less productive for the entire day and also lead to heart enlargement and heightened blood pressure

The following are some of the contributors to snoring:

Anatomy of the mouth

Tissues in the air passage are some of the factors of snoring. Narrowing of the air passage is itself a chief cause of snoring. Elongated soft palette, thickened soft palette, enlarged tonsils can all cause narrowing of this passage. All these cause obstruction of free air flow.

Drinking just before bedtime:

Most of the effective causes of snoring are those which make the throat muscles relax in excess. Alcohol being a sedative does just this. It acts as a relaxant on the throat muscles. Thus, consumption of alcohol just before sleeping can cause snoring.

Apnea

All too often, snoring and obstructive sleep apnea are found to be interrelated. So for any fitting treatment to be carried out, you must make sure that you are thoroughly diagnosed.

Nasal problems

Various biological factors may also lead to poor air flow through the nose. The nasal bridge or septum as technically referred to is the underlying factor. When there is nasal congestion or when it is out of shape (crooked), there are greater chances of snoring.

There are many different methods to control and cure snoring, but one of the best permanent cures for snoring is surgery.

It is best to detect the cause of snoring very early since it will be easier to cure it. It is not fatal or even very damaging on health but more you procrastinate, the more severe the condition is likely to get.

Snoring - 6 Factors And Their Corresponding Remedies

Summary: Reasons why a person snores are analyzed in depth in this essay. Remedies are also highlighted to help the person live a more peaceful life.

Snoring is the annoying drumming noise that is produced by the throat along with its various components when they vibrate. It does not occur when you are awake. But when you are asleep, these tissues relax and block the normal passage for flow of air. This narrowing of the passage and inhibition of normal air flow causes snoring.

All remedial measures to snoring involve probing the cause of snoring. Only when the cause is known, can any concrete steps be taken to cure it. If not, one has to somehow find out the cause. The following can be the causes.

1. Obesity:

Sedentary life, rich food, junk food and physiological problems cause people to develop all the conditions that could eventually lead to snoring. Obesity is one of these conditions. It is well known that people who are overweight snore more than those who have their muscles toned. The fleshiness of their throat is the chief cause of this. This there is more blockade in their throats. To counter this, the overweight people are often advised to relieve themselves of a few extra pounds. Shedding these extra pounds not alone alleviates them of snoring, but also improves their overall health.

2. Drinking:

Do not consume alcohol just before sleeping. If you do, then your throat muscles will over relax and droop into the airway blocking it. This aggravates snoring.

3. Smoking:

Smoking modifies the cells in the throat among all its other ill effects. The throat generates more mucus to withstand the passage of smoke and nicotine through the air tract so that there will be no inflammation. But the accumulation of mucus itself causes a blockade to air and hence snoring occurs.

4. Sleep pattern:

There are stages of sleep. Stage1 sleep is when a person just begins sleeping. Every time a person is disturbed, he goes back to stage1 sleep. The second stage is Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep where dreams occur

Normally those who snore have a very irregular breathing pattern arising out of the grunts of their bed mates.

One should have good sleeping habits and practice sleeping at around the same time everyday to prevent snoring. Since a body requires 8 hours to rejuvenate, it is recommended that you establish a good sleep pattern.

5. Sleeping habits:

People who sleep on their back snore more than those who sleep in other positions. This is because when you sleep on your back, gravity causes your tongue to withdraw to the back of your throat. Apart from this, the tissues in the throat dangle and this air that passes has to push these muscles up to pass. This causes them to vibrate and cause snoring.

It has been observed that sleeping in an elevated position reduces chances of snoring. At an angle of 30 degrees, the tongue wont roll back and the diaphragm will relax well.

6. Medical Problems:

Peaceful sleep is lost when you have a blockage in the throat. This can be caused by inflammation that arises from allergies or infection. Tonsillitis, large adenoids, accumulation of excess mass in the throat and modification in cell contraction can block the flow of air in the throat. Surgery is commonly advised for snoring that arises of these complications

Medications Used for the Sleep Disorder of Chronic Insomnia

People that suffer from the sleep disorder of chronic insomnia must decide whether or not they are going to take a sleep medication. This decision is usually made with their physician. Many people decide to take a sleeping pill because it offers relief from the symptoms of their sleep disorder and the extreme sleepiness they are always feeling. Taking a pill can improve how they feel and also the quality of their life. However, many people worry about the side effects and health risks that come with taking sleeping pills. Sleeping pills are among the most widely used drugs in the United States, and their use continues to increase.

The types of sleep medications that are available to people with insomnia fall into two categories, prescription and over-the-counter medications. Each sleep medication affects the body differently. The effectiveness of the sleeping pill is a major factor when dealing with sufferers of this sleep disorder. How quickly the pill will take effect and how long the effect will last are very important. The effect should match the individual's sleep problem. The fast acting drugs would benefit a person who has difficulty falling asleep while a longer lasting pill would better benefit someone who has difficulty staying asleep.

Other important factors concerning medications for people with this sleep disorder include the impact the medication has on sleep quality, the tolerance that a person has for the drug, the possibility of developing a dependence on the drug, and the side effects associated with the drug. Each of these points has to be considered when deciding to take sleep medication for chronic insomnia.

Many over-the-counter sleep medications contain some type of antihistamine as a primary active ingredient. Antihistamines are widely used to treat allergies and they are also effective in helping people fall asleep. However, there has been little research done on their long-term effectiveness or safety.

Prescription medications for the sleep disorder of chronic insomnia are classified into four general groups: benzodiazepine receptor agonists, antidepressants, melatonin receptor agonists, and barbiturates. Each one of these drug groups has specific benefits in regards to treating insomnia. However, it is very important that the right type of for chronic insomnia medication is prescribed for each individual person with this sleep disorder.

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Before choosing a sleeping medication, it is very important to determine the source of the insomnia. For example, perhaps the source of the insomnia is the result of another treatable illness, or a side effect of a medication that is taken. The insomnia is then called secondary insomnia. The focus on medication should then be on the primary illness. Often the insomnia will disappear once the underlying cause is treated.

The decision of whether or not to take sleep medication for chronic insomnia has to be a personal decision. There is no right or wrong decision. However, it is important, if the choice is to take a medication for this sleep disorder, to become as educated as possible about the medication prescribed.

Muscle pain and sleeplessness

Fibromyalgia is a painful condition that affects the muscles and joints and is seen in only 3-6% of the general population in the world. It's generally seen more in females than males with a ratio percentage of 9.1 according to the College of Rheumatology and is commonly diagnosed in females between the ages of 20-50 though it's been noted that the onset happens in childhood. This is not a life-threatening disease though the degree of pain in the condition can vary day to day with periods of flare ups and remission. The disease is being argued and viewed as non-progressive, but that's a point that remains in limbo.

This is a problematic issue that can be a reason to keep someone up at night because the pain can be unbearable with the tingling and achiness in the muscles. This drives many who deal with this to endless and chronic deprivation of sleep. Those who suffer Fibromyalgia also note issues with memory and other neurological issues, but the most frequent is the issues with sleeping that individuals go through when they deal with painful, annoying flare-ups.

Other issues that surround this problem, which can make sleeping very difficult, are irritable bowel syndrome with constipation, which affects mostly women and few men. Skin disorders like dermatological disorders, headaches, myofacial twitching, and symptomatic hypoglycemia. Stress, excessive physical exertion, lack of sleep, changes in temperature and barometric pressure. This condition can worsen when individuals don't sleep or getting the proper rest and not overdoing on things in their daily lives.

The American Medical Association had officially recognized Fibromyalgia as a medical condition back in 1987 when the disorder was around since the 1800s. It's been said that flare ups are not identical to the ones that are found in people with rheumatoid arthritis, but ibuprofen like Advil, Acenomenofen (Tylenol), and Naproxene (Aleve) which are anti-inflammatory and can bring some comfort to those with Fibromyalgia flare ups. Massage has also been ideal in helping those who deal with Fibromyalgia to find comfort when they have flare ups. Massage helps to transfer fluids from the muscles and joints and increases circulation to the affected areas to bring some temporary relief for inflammation and flare ups.

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Which can actually help improve sleep for someone in pain, but it's best to get a massage when you're not on any medication due to the high risk of side effects that can be triggered from massaging tissue and muscles.

Fibromyalgia is a manageable problem if you follow your doctor's instructions and take your medication as directed and getting the right amount of sleep and getting plenty of exercise and eating a nutritious diet consisting of fresh fruits and vegetables and drinking plenty of water and limiting things in the diet that can also aggravate flare ups. When you take care of yourself properly you can actually improve the quality of sleep as well as decreasing the debilitating pain.

That can keep someone up all night long instead of allowing them to sleep and getting in a decent amount of time for rest and feeling stress free and more relaxed, so that they can face the day with no painful flare ups and discomfort that can be annoying.

Narcolepsy - A Rare Sleep Disorder

Narcolepsy, a relatively rare sleep disorder, causes people to fall asleep when they do not want to. This is caused by a neurological disorder. The brain sends signals to the body that is sleep inducing; however, they are sent at inappropriate and unpredictable times. Often it happens when a person is involved in a quiet activity, such as watching a movie or during a meeting. Sometimes a person with this sleep disorder falls asleep while driving, which is obviously extremely dangerous. Others fall asleep while they are eating or talking. The overwhelming need to sleep can come at any hour of the day during any activity.

People suffering with narcolepsy often do not realize how sleepy they are, nor how often they fall asleep. It is often a family member, friend or coworker that convinces them that they need to seek medical help for their sleep disorder.

Narcolepsy has five main symptoms. These are excessive daytime sleepiness, insomnia and fragmented sleep, sleep paralysis, cataplexy and hypnagogic hallucinations. Some people with this sleep disorder experience only one symptom but others can experience all five.

Excessive daytime sleepiness is generally the first symptom to appear. Everyone with narcolepsy has this symptom. The feeling of needing to sleep is so strong that sufferers are unable to fend it off, regardless of how hard they try. These sleep attacks, as they are usually called, can happen several times and last for five to ten minutes.

Insomnia and fragmented sleep are a very common symptom of this sleep disorder. People with narcolepsy often have a very difficult time falling asleep at night, even though they fall asleep easily throughout the day. When they do fall asleep at night they wake up often and do not follow a typical REM / non REM sleep pattern.

Sleep paralysis occurs in about half of the people that suffer from this sleep disorder. For several minutes before falling to sleep or waking up, the person with this symptom cannot talk or move.

The loss of muscle function while awake is cataplexy. These episodes are usually very short in length. Over half of the people with narcolepsy experience this symptom of this sleep disorder. They are caused by a part of REM not functioning correctly. Often, episodes are brought on by anger, laughter or any other strong emotion. Sometimes knees buckle, necks and jaws become weak or the person may fall to the ground. Even though the person looks like they are asleep and cannot talk, they are fully awake and aware of what is happening.

A hypnagogic hallucination is experiencing very vivid and often frightening sounds, images or physical sensations. These occur from dreams just before the person is falling asleep or waking up. It is very difficult for a person with this sleep disorder to distinguish between the dream and reality. These hallucinations often have very dangerous themes and are extremely frightening. Often they are accompanied by sleep paralysis.

There are also several lesser symptoms of narcolepsy. These include blurred vision, migraine headaches, memory or concentration problems and automatic behavior. An episode of automatic behavior can last for several minutes. During that time a person with this sleep disorder will perform a routine task. The task is often done incorrectly, such as placing a turkey in the dishwasher or writing past the end of a page.

Narcolepsy can be diagnosed and treated with various drugs. If left untreated this sleep disorder can ruin a person's life.

Narcolepsy: The sleeping disease

There are over 3 million cases of narcolepsy and is estimated by medical reports that 200,000 Americans, but just under 50,000 are actually officially diagnosed by a doctor. It has been said that it's widespread like the neurological disease Parkinson's disorder. This condition is usually recognized in both men and women at any age, yet the symptoms are usually first noticed in teenagers and younger age adults usually in their 20s and early 30s.

It's been noted that there is a 15-year between the onset and actual diagnosis of the problem, which has contributed to the debilitating features of this particular disorder. Those who deal with narcolepsy have a plethora of cognitive, educational, occupational, and psychological issues that can arise from this problem. The presence of narcolepsy is 1 in 2000 people and is also found in people with diagnosed learning disabilities and currently the treatment options are very limited.

The studies that were conducted for this concluded that this problem is constantly under diagnosed in the general population in society. Some narcoleptics don't show any signs visibly and the severity of the condition varies from person to person.

This is where medical science has its blunders because of the fact that this condition is so under diagnosed that it's hard to really get a grasp of the severity of this problem, because it varies in levels from noticeable to barely obvious.

Polysonogram and Multiple Sleep Latency exams are the two tests that are done to give a formal and correct diagnostic approach to the condition and usually this is where the diagnosis presents the level of severity so that it's properly noted by a specialist to ensure a proper treatment plan for that person. Tests are conducted in two-hour increments to allow the person to sleep and usually the polysonogram test does a continuous test of brain activity when it's in REM sleep mode when sleep happens at night.

Usually most narcoleptics fall asleep in nighttime sleep mode fairly quickly. There are several methods of treatments for people with narcolepsy and usually it consists of anti-depressants and planned short-timed naps have also been helpful to lower the dependence on medicinal treatments and allowing the body to do what it should be doing naturally. Retraining the body to sleep at a reasonable time has helped those with narcolepsy to recognize sleeping at night and taking short naps during the day so that their body stays alert because a lot of narcoleptics have been putting themselves and others at risk when they fall asleep during their normal work day or even driving or operating machinery.

With the new wave of holistic medicine being readily available to help people with conditions from skin to psychological issues. Narcoleptics can also work with a treatment plan that includes a change in diet and incorporating exercise and taking nutritional supplements and formulas to give someone added nutrition if they're not getting enough from the food they eat.

Narcolepsy is manageable if you follow the doctor's instructions and taking medications when you're supposed to and following therapy plans that are designed for that person to follow to the last detail.

Nightmares and Night Terrors - A Frightening Sleep Disorder

At some time in their childhood almost all children experience the sleep disorder of having a nightmare. They are common in children and can begin as early as two years old. They are most common in children between three and twelve years old and are considered part of the normal developmental process. However, only about 3 percent, experience night terrors, also called sleep terrors. Both of these sleep disorders can be very frightening to a child.

Nightmares are dreams that are so frightening that they wake the person up. Everyone has had nightmares occasionally throughout their life and they usually are not something to worry about. Nightmares occur several hours after going to sleep during the REM stage of sleep when there is general body paralysis and active dreaming.

A child can remember the nightmare once they awake and they still remember it in the morning. Sometimes this nightmare sleep disorder can become a problem if the child has nightmares very often and becomes afraid to go to sleep or becomes sleep deprived. When a nightmare occurs it is important that the parent remains calm and reassuring.

There are several things that a parent can do to prevent nightmares. Discuss calm and comforting things with your child just before putting them to bed. Reading to them, or telling them a story can also be very comforting. Don't let a child watch violent or scary shows on television, especially just before going to bed. Maintaining a relaxing bedtime routine is also important. Sometimes, nightmares indicate a more severe emotional problem within your child.

Night terrors usually occur during the first few hours of sleep, during deep non-REM sleep. They often occur at the same time each night. Night terrors are characterized by screaming, crying or moaning. It is not unusual for a child experiencing a night terror to sit straight up in bed and scream. Their heart rate is increased and they experience rapid breathing. An episode of this sleep disorder can last from 10 minutes to over an hour. Although the child's eyes are open, they are actually still asleep and when they wake up in the morning there is no memory of what happened during the night.

Although night terrors can be frightening, they are not dangerous. They usually are not a sign of any type of mental distress. A parent should not try to wake the child, or comfort them, during a

night terror. The best thing for a parent to do when their child is experiencing a night terror is to make sure they are safe. Generally, most children outgrow this sleep disorder after a few months or years.

Several of the factors that can contribute to night terrors include being overly tired, staying up extremely late, eating a heavy meal just before going to bed, and taking certain medications.

Although nightmares and night terrors can seem like a very scary type of sleep disorder to both the parents and the children involved, they are generally harmless.

Nocturnal Eating Syndrome - A Food Related Sleep Disorder

Nocturnal eating syndrome is a sleep disorder that is more common in women than men. It is one of two eating disorders that are related to sleep. The other is called sleep-related food disorder. Nocturnal eating syndrome and sleep-related food disorder are parasomnias

Nocturnal eating syndrome is a sleep disorder that is characterized by compulsive raids on the refrigerator at night. Usually people with this sleep disorder are very light sleepers. When they awake during the night they have an overly compulsive feeling that they will not be able to fall back to sleep unless they eat something. Once out of bed and at the refrigerator, the compulsion to eat makes them gobble down food. People with nocturnal eating syndrome are fully awake and remember eating the food the next day. This syndrome is a combination of a sleep disorder and an eating disorder. Insomnia is also a factor in nocturnal eating syndrome. Treatment for this disorder is usually received from a mental health professional that specializes in people with eating disorders. Improving sleep hygiene can also help with this disorder.

Sleep-related eating disorder also affects more women than men and is a variation of sleepwalking. During an episode of this sleep disorder, a person will eat during partial arousal from a deep sleep. Often they will eat very unhealthy or strange foods that they normally would not eat when awake. During an episode of sleep-related eating disorder, a person might eat frozen pizza, raw cookie dough, peanut butter on fish and even dog food. Often they are very careless and sloppy and may get burns or cuts while preparing the food. It is very difficult to wake a person during an episode and they have no memory of it in the morning. There does not seem to be a correlation to hunger during a sleep-related eating disorder episode, even if the person has eaten just before bed, an episode can still occur.

Although the cause of food related sleep disorder is not known, several triggers have been identified. Medications such as lithium, a mood stabilizer, and the benzodiazepine receptor zolpidem are two of those triggers. People with mood and personality disorders or psychological problems such as bulimia are at higher risk of developing one of these food related sleep disorders. People suffering from other sleep disorders including insomnia, sleep apnea, periodic limb movement disorder or narcolepsy are also at higher risk

People with sleep-related eating disorder usually have a history of sleepwalking. Because of this, people suffering from this parasomnia are considered having more of a sleep disorder than an eating disorder. Treatment with prescription medication is often very effective.

Antidepressants, dopamine agents, anticonvulsants and opiates are often prescribed. Once sleepwalking is stopped so are the trips to the refrigerator.

Sleep eaters often are overweight because of the high caloric intake at night. The weight gain can lead to other sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea. Seeking treatment, either from a medical or mental health professional is essential for good health in the treatment of sleep eating disorders.

Shift Work Sleep Disorder

Many people that work during the night suffer from Shift Work Sleep Disorder, also known as SWSD. This disorder affects about one quarter of the approximately 20 million people who do shift work. People affected by shift work sleep disorder are employed in many types of jobs. These include large numbers of workers in industries such as transportation, manufacturing, mining, power, health care, and emergency services including police and firefighters and EMTs. Many of these industries operate around the clock and many various shift schedules exist.

Working a shift job forces your body to function outside of its natural circadian rhythm. Their circadian rhythms never become fully adjusted to their hours. No matter how long a person works at night, when they are greeted by the morning sunlight a signal is sent to their brain saying it is time to wake up. A person suffering from this sleep disorder lives in a state of constant circadian disruption.

There are several coping strategies for people with shift work sleep disorder. The most important thing to remember when coping with the challenges of shift work is recognizing the importance of sleep and making it a priority.

Sleeping during the daytime can be very difficult for some people. Besides going against the body's natural circadian rhythm, there are also the sunlight and the everyday life of the rest of the world, most of which is awake. Many people with this sleep disorder move their bedroom to an isolated place in the house and try to make the room as quiet and dark as possible.

It is best to try to avoid as much of the morning sunlight as possible if you plan to go to sleep right after your night shift. Wear sunglasses on the way home and try not to stop for gas or groceries. The more sunlight you are exposed to, the more likely you are going to have a difficult time falling asleep.

Another coping technique is to develop a sleep strategy. It is very important to set a specific time to sleep. Many people that suffer from shift work sleep disorder find it is best to follow the same sleep routine even on the days they are off from work. It is essential that family and

friends know not to bother you during your sleep time unless it is an emergency. Generally, shift workers are chronically sleep deprived. Scheduling naps at specific times can be a great help in dealing with the sleep disorder that accompanies shift work.

People with this sleep disorder should limit the amount of caffeine during the later part of their shift. Some people establish a caffeine cutoff time, after that they drink juice or water.

The use of sleeping pills for shift workers can develop into a dependency on them. Taking sleeping pills on a daily basis can lead to other health problems.

Not everyone is able to tolerate working during the night. The constant battle with this sleep disorder may cause some people to find a different job.

Sleep Apnea - A Sleep Disorder That Can Be Fatal

Sleep Apnea is a serious sleep disorder that can be life threatening and at times fatal. People with sleep apnea often fall asleep normally; however, once asleep their ability to breathe is blocked. Usually this inability to breathe is caused by the muscles in the throat relaxing too much and collapsing into the airway. The body then sends a signal to the brain that breathing has temporarily been blocked. This causes the person to wake up and start breathing again.

The cycle of interrupted breathing can occur many times throughout the night. These episodes can occur up to 50 times an hour and last for ten seconds or longer. Often the person that suffers from this sleep disorder is unaware that anything is happening to them. They can not understand why they always feel tired during the daytime.

The most common form of this sleep disorder is obstructive sleep apnea, known as OSA. Some sufferers of obstructive sleep apnea also suffer from central sleep apnea. This sleep disorder is then called mixed sleep apnea.

It is believed that obstructive sleep apnea affects between 18 - 20% of the adults in the United States. If this sleep disorder is left untreated it can become life threatening and in rare cases fatal. It is the underlying cause of illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, pulmonary hypertension and systemic hypertension.

There are several methods of treatments for sleep apnea, both surgical and noninvasive. The first line of therapy for someone suffering from moderate to severe sleep apnea is called positive airway pressure. Known as PAP, positive airway pressure is a noninvasive form of treatment. A machine delivers a constant flow of air through a mask that is worn while sleeping. The force of the air flow must be determined by a sleep technician during an overnight sleep study. There are three types of positive air pressure therapy, CPAP, BiPAP and AutoPAP.

Dental devices are also used to treat this sleep disorder in mild to moderate cases. Dental devices fall into two general categories: mandibular, or lower jaw, advancing devices or tongue retaining devices. Mandibular devices are used most often. They attach to the upper jaw and pull the lower jaw and base of the tongue forward. This shift in position keeps the airway open.

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Medications are generally not a successful form of treatment for most people with sleep apnea. However, many of them do take antidepressants and modafinil.

Supplemental oxygen is often used in conjunction with a PAP machine. Oxygen alone can not prevent the collapse of the airway or sleep fragmentation. However, oxygen can prevent the drop in the level of blood oxygen that occurs when the airway collapses.

There are also surgical treatments for obstructive sleep apnea that may be an option for some sufferers of this sleep disorder. These include uvulopalatopharyngoplasty, somnoplasty, corrective jaw surgery, palatal implants and tracheostomy.

People with this sleep disorder generally find that their quality of life can improve with the proper treatment.

Sleep Apnea: A Weighty Issue

Sleep apnea is the condition for where there are pauses in breathing during sleep. These are defined by medical terminology when an individual literally stops breathing. There are two types of apneas Central and Obstructive. This is a common problem among the morbidly obese which requires them to wear an oxygen mask so they can breathe since that's due in part of their weight bearing down on their chest crushing their rib cage and lungs.

According to medical reports the populations at risk are obese middle-aged males since physiology doesn't make women potential sufferers of sleep apnea. The problem is that people who do fall asleep due to sleep apnea will go through brief periods where people think they're not going to wake up. Keep in mind that this is very serious because if it's not properly diagnosed it can be life threatening. People with excessive weight usually morbidly obese constantly have to deal with frequent episodes of paused breathing. Snoring is a common problem with the morbidly obese and constant gasping for air while sleeping is another problem. Obstructive sleep apnea can be dangerous to the heart because it's prolonging and deprivation of oxygen to keep the circulation flowing efficiently.

Other symptoms that are deemed non-specific are headaches, irritability, moodiness, difficulty concentrating, Nocturia (getting up in the middle of the night to urinate), increased urination, decreased sexual drive, increased heart rate, anxiety, depression, esophageal reflux (acid reflux disease), and profuse heavy sweating at night.

Sleep apnea has also been linked to congestive and congenital heart failure usually found in people who are diagnosed as morbidly obese because of the excessive weight on them. This is from severe and prolonged cases meaning the individual(s) were not being treated and had let the condition get to the point that it's no longer treatable.

Individuals born with Down's Syndrome are likely to develop obstructive sleep apnea since 50% of the population that has this genetic condition are likely to be diagnosed because of having an enlarged head, adenoids, tonsils, tongue, and narrowing of the nasopharynx. Pharyngeal flap surgery has also been noted to cause sleep apnea in patients because of the obstruction in the breathing pattern after surgery which if not monitored can be life threatening. There are different treatments for people with sleep apnea and doctors and ENT (Ear Nose and Throat) specialists

take the following into consideration for designing a treatment plan for those who are diagnosed with this condition.

The factors that are considered are an individual's medical history, severity of the disorder, and the specific cause for the obstruction. Some treatments also incorporate a lifestyle change, avoiding alcohol and medications that can relax the nervous system.

Other lifestyle changes is losing weight and quitting smoking, and incorporate things like elevating themselves while sleeping so that they can breathe using slanted pillows. The weight issue is the biggest lifestyle concern because that causes some people to be confined to beds where they can't move and be active contributing further into a person's weight gain.

Usually if someone who's morbidly obese and loses about 50 pounds within a couple months their condition improves, but it's usually up to a steady support system to get someone on a set routine and healthy eating plan that helps to get their weight down so they can qualify for other treatments to help them maintain weight loss which is either through gastric bypass which has to be strongly enforced since this surgery is irreversible and you have to eat differently and undergo a major lifestyle change. The other option is lap band, which is reversible, but again to maintain the weight loss to improve sleep and breathing patterns comes with monitoring what one eats and exercise to help improve breathing patterns.

Sleep Disorder - A Growing Concern in the United States

In the United States alone, it is estimated that approximately 60 - 80 million people have some form of sleep disorder. This number continues to rise. Several of the reasons for the increasing numbers are the aging of the American population, the change in our lifestyle and the obesity epidemic. Of course there are other factors that can lead to a sleep disorder, such as, stress, shift work, illness or genetics.

There are more than 100 different types of sleep disorders. They range in severity from minor to life threatening. People of any age, from infants to the aged, can be affected by a sleep disorder at any time of their lives.

As sleep disorders increase in the United States, so do the dangers that are associated with them.

Tiredness can lead to slower mental alertness and a slower reaction time. This can be a very dangerous combination. Between 20 - 25% of all serious vehicular accidents involve a tired driver. Many of these drivers suffer from some form of sleep disorder and may not even be aware of it. A large number of accidents that occur at home or at work are also due to people with some type of sleeping problem. Sleep disorder, combined with the cost of the accidents and illnesses it causes, results in the American people and the government spending billions of dollars.

Lack of sleep is directly related to many physical ailments and conditions. People that do not get sufficient sleep generally suffer more from headaches, sore joints and stomach problems. Often a sleep disorder is an underlying cause of heart problems, lung conditions and diabetes. Sleep disorders can also affect the mental well being of people stricken with them. Mood changes, anxiety, eating disorders and depression can result.

Many people still do not think of a sleeping problem as a medical problem. Because of this, many never tell their physician that they are having a problem with sleep. Even if they see their doctor on a regular basis for an illness or condition, they never mention their difficulty sleeping.

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As the American public and medical community become more educated and aware of the symptoms, effects and severity of various sleep disorders, more and more cases are being diagnosed. Sufferers are being treated with medication, oxygen, cpap machines and even surgery. There are better screening methods and diagnostic tests which find sleep disorder problems earlier. Overnight sleep centers no longer resemble a hospital room. They are now designed to look more like a hotel room, to make the patient feel more comfortable. In some cases, due to computerization and miniaturization, equipment can be so small that some testing can even be done at home.

Sleep is not an option or a luxury. It is a basic element of living and of good health. If you think you, your partner or your child may be suffering from a sleep disorder see your physician. A sleep disorder is a medical problem that can be helped.

Sleep Disorder Affecting Shift Workers

This is a fairly common form of sleeping disorder among medical professionals, police officers, and fireman. This is attributed mostly to people who change their work schedules and sleeping times around frequently. You'll find this often in college students when they're changing semesters and quarters when they get new schedules and can sometimes throw sleep patterns off.

Meaning if you were used to getting up early one semester and then you get to sleep late on another it can throw your sleeping patterns off, which can make you feel disoriented and confused which is the main cause for why people get up and retire late, and are late for their jobs and classes because they're not giving themselves enough time to adjust between schedule changes.

This is why when a job or school schedules changes it's ideal to give yourself adequate time to make the adjustment so that it doesn't throw you off physically, so you're able to wake up and retire at a reasonable time so you can make it to work and school on time.

This is why it's not always wise to constantly change your schedule whenever possible because if you do it too much you're going to confuse yourself on whether you're coming or going. There are some people who's jobs switch their schedules around so much that it can throw someone completely out of synch because the hours start to get rather conflicted when they're coming and going and not making time for other things like having a life or maintaining their priorities outside of their job and school.

This also can happen if you're running between more than one job and school because if you're going to a job during the day and then running to another job at night it can throw you off as well. People are advised to give themselves so much time between things in order to make the full transition into the new schedule or time frame so they're not feeling overwhelmed and stressed out since stress can play a huge thing in work related insomnia. The stress comes from having to make so many drastic changes too fast and at one time.

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This is why people get burned out quickly and dealing with the physical things like indigestion and other things because they're pushing themselves too hard and sometimes forcing themselves to do things that isn't even normal and is considered unhealthy.

College students who are like this tending to gain or lose weight because of the stress they're under to switch from one thing to another and not giving themselves a chance to really adjust fully to a schedule or lifestyle change. Even people who work as nurses and doctors occasionally go through this. Because hours are rather strange, and that can throw off the pattern your body has become custom to when to rise and retire and if you interfere with that, it can make you feel weird which can also affect appetite and mental focus and concentration which most people deal with the disorientation of switching things around too fast.

Sleep Disorder and Teenagers

There is a sleep disorder that affects between seven to ten percent of teenagers called Delayed Sleep Phase Disorder, also known as DNS. Most teenagers outgrow this disorder by the time they reach young adulthood. Less than one percent of adults are believed to have DSP. Often people mistake this sleep disorder for insomnia.

Left on their own, people with delayed sleep phase disorder would stay up until very late, sometimes until 4 or 5 a.m. They like to get up very late in the morning or early afternoon. Often they are referred to as night owls.

Many teenagers like to stay up late and sleep late in the morning. Sometimes this is because they want to socialize at that time of the day. However, it can also be due to the natural delay in the circadian sleep / wake rhythm at their age of development.

Teenagers with this sleep disorder often have a very hard time getting up in the morning for school. Even if they go to sleep at a regular time, such as 11 p.m., they toss and turn for hours like someone with insomnia. The difference is, unlike an insomniac, people with delayed sleep phase disorder have no difficulty staying asleep. They do have a very difficult time getting up early in the morning. Teenagers with this sleep disorder are very tired during the day and may even fall asleep in the classroom. The exact cause of this sleep disorder is not known. It is known for certain that it is a circadian rhythm problem.

Treatment for this sleep disorder is available for people that need to get onto a more traditional sleep / wake schedule. The types of treatment include, bright light, chronotherapy, melatonin and over-the-counter prescribed sleeping pills.

Bright light treatment for delayed sleep phase disorder uses bright light to trick the brain's circadian clock. Exposure to bright light shifts the circadian rhythm if it is administered within a few hours of the body's lowest temperature at night.

Using chronotherapy as a treatment for someone with delayed sleep phase disorder requires a block of time one week long. Each day bedtime is delayed by three hours successively. For example, for someone that falls asleep at 2 a.m. but wants to fall asleep at 11 p.m., their

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bedtime would move to 5 a.m. on the first day. The next day it would move to 8 a.m. and continue this cycle for a week. A teenager suffering with delayed sleep phase disorder would need a week off from school in order to complete this therapy. Once the desired bed time is reached it is very important to keep a consistent wake up time.

There are several treatments involving various drugs that are used to treat delayed sleep phase disorder. Melatonin has been successful in changing the sleep cycle of people with this sleep disorder. Prescription medications such as Ramelteon, and other sleeping pills, have been successful in treating teenagers and adults with delayed sleep phase disorder.

If your teenager has trouble falling asleep and always wants to stay up late, be aware of the possibility that a sleep disorder may be present.

Sleeping Disorders: The History

When we hear about sleeping disorders we're commonly hearing about those who sleepwalk and can't sleep which is known as insomnia, but often we wonder why sleeping disorders are becoming a prominent issue in today's society. Right now according to the website Wikipedia there are a total of 14 different disorders ranging from eye twitching to restless legs. Some of these problems are treatable and even preventable when monitored by a doctor or specialized health professional. Sleeping disorders can be extremely dangerous when they go undiagnosed. Many people who are suffering from this disorder are facing a lot of life threatening problems because having a sleeping disorder can disrupt you from living your normal everyday life.

This can overtake someone if they're spending more time worrying about their condition than getting the correct amount of sleep. The problem with many people who are dealing with a sleeping disorder is that they're not aware of it being a problem until they see it's affecting their job and everyday life. Those who suffer from this can also develop clinical depression because they feel like they're not able to do any of the things they're used to doing if they've been diagnosed with a sleep disorder.

Individuals are given a test called the Polysomnogram which is used to determine and diagnose sleep disorders so specialists and doctors can plan a treatment designed for that individual person since not all treatments are the same. According to Wikipedia they list the common treatment options for sleeping disorders are: behavioral/psychotherapeutic, medications (Rozerem, Ambien, Ambien CR and Lunesta are common prescribed sleeping pills given for those diagnosed with a sleeping disorder), and other somatic treatments that are given. Sometimes people who have disorders such as narcolepsy usually have their brain activity measured to see where they are reaching peak points of sleeping so they can be treated since narcoleptics can't really work on jobs that require them to operate machinery or other things because they have to be alert and awake to know what they're doing.

Many people who are currently diagnosed with a sleeping disorder are usually treated medicinally for whatever time period the doctor prescribes and monitors the person's condition for. Having a sleeping disorder can make people feel like they're not normal and that they're sick

when it's not a sickness and that you can treat the problem through medicine and proper therapy to retrain your body to sleep on a normal scale.

The average person sleeps anywhere between 6-8 hours, but the most anyone sleeps is 10 hours. It's noted that people who sleep more than the regular number of hours tend to throw their bodies off due to the fact that naturally we sleep and awake when the day changes. It's ideal to get the right amount of rest because of the fact that your immune system can stress out when you don't get any kind of rest which can also trigger other medical and health issues from the lack of rest.

This can be a problem with mostly younger people because you find that lifestyles in this day and age trigger the use of drugs, drinking, smoking, and a poor diet consisting of a lot of unhealthy food choices and a lack of exercise and maintaining physical health.

What to Expect at a Sleep Disorder Overnight Sleep Center

If you think you may have a sleep disorder, your primary doctor or a doctor that specializes in sleep disorders may send you to a sleep center for diagnosis. There are a large number of sleep centers located across the United States and their numbers are increasing. Sleep centers in the United States must be accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

When a person goes to a sleep center, it is usually for an overnight stay. Costs involved for most sleep study tests range from one to three thousand dollars and many need to be repeated twice. The first visit to diagnose the sleep disorder and the second to get accurate settings for any PAP machines that may be needed. Health insurance generally pays all or most of the cost of the tests needed to diagnose a sleep disorder.

Once an appointment has been made, many sleep centers send a sleep diary to the patient. The information from the sleep diary is used by the doctors to understand general sleeping patterns.

It is also recommended that no caffeine or alcohol be consumed after 12:00 p.m. on the day of the scheduled test.

Generally the patient packs an overnight bag just as if they were going to stay at a hotel overnight. During the sleep study you wear your own nightclothes and you can use a favorite pillow from home. You can bring a book or magazine if you like to read before falling to sleep. Most sleep centers resemble a hotel room and have a television to watch if that is what the patient usually does before going to sleep at home. Once you are relaxed the sleep center technician starts preparation for the equipment needed to record your patterns of sleep.

Diagnosis from a sleep center study is made using polysomnography which records a continual record of your sleep. In order to take a specific reading slightly more than two dozen small thin electrodes are pasted to specific parts of your body. They are placed under your chin, on your scalp, near your eyes and nose, on your finger, chest and legs, and also over the rib muscles and on the abdomen. These electrodes then record various types of readings during the night. Often an audio and video tape are also made to monitor sleep noises and movement.

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Once all the equipment is in place the sleep technician leaves you alone to fall asleep. Even with all the equipment it is not uncomfortable. It is easy to move or turn onto your side. Each bedroom in a sleep center also has an automatic intercom so it is easy to call the technician if needed for such things as a bathroom break. When the sleep study is completed, the technician may wake you. Most studies that are used to diagnose a sleep disorder take seven to eight hours.

The readings are collected on a computer file called a polysomnogram and are monitored and analyzed by the sleep technician during the night. The results are then sent for further readings to determine if there is a sleep disorder.

Although a sleep study may not sound comfortable, it is very important to determine and treat any sleep disorder.

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