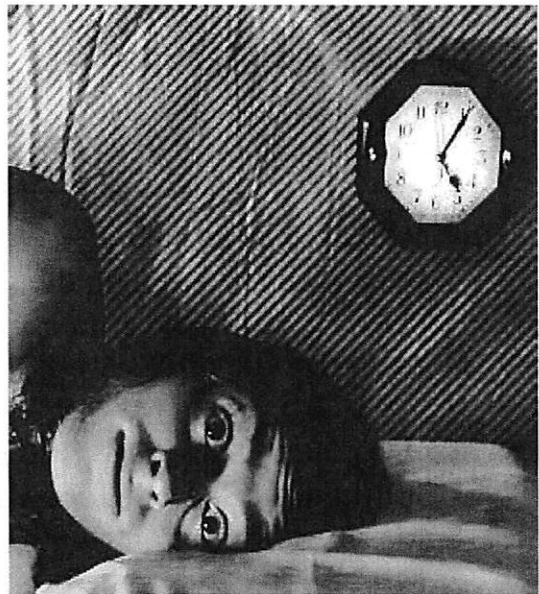
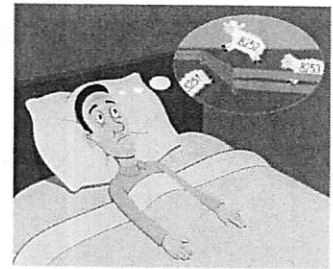


# Tools and Tricks for Healthy Sleep

1. **Stick to a sleep schedule of the same bedtime and wake up time, even on the weekends.** This helps to regulate your body's clock and could help you fall asleep and stay asleep for the night.
2. **Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual.** A relaxing, routine activity right before bedtime conducted away from bright lights helps separate your sleep time from activities that can cause excitement, stress or anxiety which can make it more difficult to fall asleep, get sound and deep sleep or remain asleep. Some examples may be taking a bath, reading or drinking non-caffeinated tea such as Chamomile.
3. **If you have trouble sleeping, avoid naps, especially in the afternoon.** Power napping may help you get through the day, but if you find that you can't fall asleep at bedtime, eliminating even short catnaps may help.
4. **Exercise daily.** Vigorous exercise is best, but even light exercise is better than no activity. Avoid exercising too close to bedtime; experts suggest not exercising within three hours of sleep.
5. **Evaluate your room.** Design your sleep environment to establish the conditions you need for sleep. Your bedroom should be cool – between 60 and 67 degrees. Your bedroom should also be free from any noise that can disturb your sleep. Finally, your bedroom should be free from any light. Check your room for noises or other distractions. This includes a bed partner's sleep disruptions such as snoring. Consider using blackout curtains, eye shades, ear plugs, "white noise" machines, humidifiers, fans and other devices.



6. **Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.** Make sure your mattress is comfortable and supportive. Have comfortable pillows and make the room attractive and inviting for sleep but also free of allergens that might affect you.
7. **Use bright light to help manage your circadian rhythms.** Avoid bright light in the evening and expose yourself to sunlight in the morning. This will keep your circadian rhythms in check.
8. **Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and heavy meals in the evening.** Alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine can disrupt sleep. Eating big or spicy meals can cause discomfort from indigestion that can make it hard to sleep. If you can, avoid eating large meals for two to three hours before bedtime. Try a light snack 45 minutes before bed if you're still hungry.
9. **Wind down.** Your body needs time to shift into sleep mode, so spend the last hour before bed doing a calming activity such as reading. For some people, using an electronic device such as a laptop can make it hard to fall asleep, because the particular type of light emanating from the screens of these devices is activating to the brain. If you have trouble sleeping, avoid electronics before bed or in the middle of the night.
10. **If you can't sleep, go into another room and do something relaxing until you feel tired.** Take work materials, computers and televisions out of the sleeping environment. Use your bed only for sleep to strengthen the association between bed and sleep. If you associate a particular activity or item with anxiety about sleeping, omit it from your bedtime routine.
11. **Essential Oils.** Studies have found that aromatherapy can help to treat insomnia. Scents such as Lavender and Chamomile are found to be relaxing and may be added to a bath, sprayed in a room or smelled directly from a bottle.



# mindful

taking time for what matters

SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE

- [Print Edition](#)
- [iPad Edition](#)
- [Give a Gift](#)
- [Renew](#)



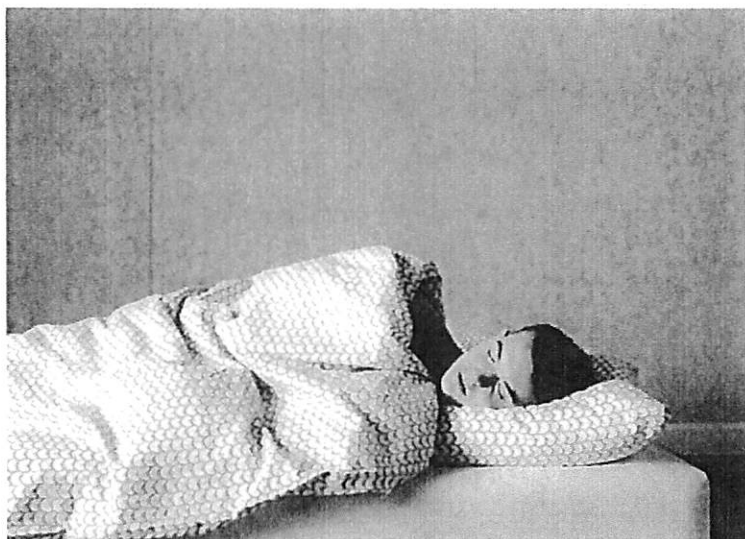
[in BODY & MIND](#) [in LOVE & RELATIONSHIPS](#) [at HOME](#) [at WORK](#) [in YOUR LIFE](#) [MINDFULNESS PRACTICE](#)  
[MAGAZINE](#) [the MINDFUL SOCIETY](#) [the SCIENCE](#) [our PARTNERS](#) [NEWS](#) [RESOURCES](#) [MINDFUL VOICES](#)

MINDFUL MAGAZINE

## 5 Steps to Wind Down and Fall Asleep

Like [4.9k](#) Tweet [457](#) [g+](#) [45](#) [692 \(#\)](#) [\(#\)](#)

How to stop tossing and turning and get some quality shut-eye.



Model Photo: Colourbox.com

By Shelby Freedman Harris

As someone who works every day with patients struggling with insomnia, the most common thing I hear is once the head hits the pillow, the brain doesn't stop. They know sleep should come, but the brain just wants to think about both pressing and mundane things, such as reviewing the day's events and tasks that need to be completed.

When we lose *awareness* of the present moment, our minds get stuck in maladaptive ways of thinking. For example, you might be trying to go to sleep but your mind gets lost thinking about all the groceries you need to buy. Deep, relaxed breathing is forgotten. And once you realize sleep isn't happening, your muscles tense and your thought process quickly shifts to "I'm not falling asleep! I have XYZ to do this week and I won't be able to function tomorrow." The body seizes up, breathing and heart rate can both quicken, and falling sleep becomes more difficult.

Newer models of insomnia treatment are beginning to incorporate mindfulness. Here's a grounding exercise to help you get some quality shut-eye.

**1. Dim the lights 1 hour before bedtime.** Start winding down the brain and body by dimming the lights. Engage in relaxing activities outside the bedroom that pass the time quietly.

2. Avoid looking at anything with a screen. Stow away your tablet, phone, computer, and TV for the night—the light can keep you awake and alert.

3. Ten minutes before bedtime, begin a focused mindfulness exercise. Sit in a comfortable chair in the same dimly lit room. Imagine the outline of your body and slowly trace it in your head. Keep in mind the amount of pressure you're feeling against the chair or the ground and be mindful of where there's more pressure and where there's less. Start with your head. Is it touching the back of the chair? How heavy does it feel against the chair, wall, or just the air? Then slowly move down to your ear, then shoulder, arm, and leg. Work down to your feet and then back up the other side of your body. Take about five minutes for this exercise.

4. If your mind begins to wander, notice that it wandered and get back on track. Try to avoid judging yourself—your mind will indeed wander; the skill lies in getting it back on track.

5. Get in bed and focus on your breath. If you are unable to fall asleep, get up, sit in the comfortable chair again and repeat the exercise. Don't get back into bed until you're sleepy—and don't sleep in the chair!

*Shelby Freedman Harris is a clinical psychologist and director of the Behavioral Sleep Medicine Program at the Sleep-Wake Disorders Center at Montefiore Medical Center in New York.*

This article also appeared in the [February 2015 issue of Mindful](http://www.mindful.org/mindful-magazine/february-2015-issue) (<http://www.mindful.org/mindful-magazine/february-2015-issue>) magazine.

Subscribe to Mindful's [print edition](https://subscribe.pcspublink.com/sub/subscribe.aspx?guid=f521239b-7bff-4e1a-832a-8f41acfabd7a) (<https://subscribe.pcspublink.com/sub/subscribe.aspx?guid=f521239b-7bff-4e1a-832a-8f41acfabd7a>) or [digital edition](https://subscribe.pcspublink.com/sub/subscribe.aspx?guid=6f4c45e9-6373-450e-96b7-987422b15bac) (<https://subscribe.pcspublink.com/sub/subscribe.aspx?guid=6f4c45e9-6373-450e-96b7-987422b15bac>).

### Get the Weekly Mindful Newsletter

email address

Subscribe

{ 4.9k }

Tweet 457

+1 45

692 (#) (#)

7 Comments

Mindful

Login

Recommend 8

Share

Sort by Best

Join the discussion



**Dan Blase** · 3/24/15 · 10:00 AM

Great suggestions for winding down and getting to sleep. I appreciate these and have found them helpful in my own life. How would you suggest addressing the issue of falling asleep easily and regularly around 10pm, but often waking at 3:30 am?

47 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1



**stephanyatmindful** · 3/24/15 · 10:00 AM

Good question! A super-relaxing meditation practice that will keep your mind off of thinking "WHY AM I NOT ASLEEP" is the body scan practice. Follow this link for the instructions: <http://www.mindful.org/mindful...>

1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1



**Matt\_R2** · 3/24/15 · 10:00 AM

This happens to me too. And as soon as I wake up, my cat wakes up and wants breakfast.

1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1 · 1

6. Do not eat a heavy meal close to bedtime (a light bedtime snack such as milk, peanut butter, or cheese is OK)

*Do not try too hard to sleep*

*Just let sleep unfold*

Above all, **be patient!** Your sleep problem developed over time so it will take some time to return to a more normal sleep pattern. By following the suggestions in this pamphlet, you should see gradual sleep improvements.

Notes:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# A Guide to Overcoming Your Insomnia

This pamphlet outlines a simple, sensible, and highly effective approach for eliminating insomnia. By following these few simple rules, you should be able to get the sleep of your dreams.

## **Sleep Guidelines**

**1 Wake-up at \_\_\_\_\_** every day whether you have a good or poor sleep on any particular night.

**2 Go to bed when you are sleepy, but not before \_\_\_\_\_.** Long periods of time in bed will lead to shallow, broken sleep. You should spend only the amount of time in bed that you actually need for sleep. Sticking to the suggested bedtime and waketime will help you overcome your sleep problem.

**3 Get up when you can't sleep.** When you are unable to sleep, get up and go to another room until you feel sleepy enough to fall asleep quickly before returning to bed. Get up again if sleep does not come on quickly.

**4 Use the bed only for sleeping.** Do not read, eat, watch

TV, etc. in bed. Sex is the only exception.

**5 Avoid daytime napping.** Napping, particularly in the late afternoon or early evening may interfere with your night's sleep.

**6 Create a buffer zone.** The "buffer zone" is a quiet time prior to bed time. During this time, you should do things that are enjoyable on their own rather than activities that are taken as a means to an end.

**7 Don't worry, plan, etc., in bed.** If you are worrying, planning or can't shut off your thoughts, get up and stay up until you can return to bed without these mental activities interfering with your sleep.

**My standard rising time is**

---

**My earliest bedtime is**

---

### **Other helpful practices:**

1. Turn the clock around
2. Limit caffeine and consume before noon
3. Limit alcohol and do not consume within 3 hours of bedtime
4. Exercise regularly but not close to bedtime
5. Keep bedroom quiet, dark, and cool

## Things to do if you are awake

### **In the evening:**

- ❖ Choose clothes that you can wear for work or school the next day
- ❖ Make your lunch
- ❖ Marinate or start to prepare food for dinner the following day and store it in the refrigerator
- ❖ Take a bath or long shower
- ❖ Write thank you notes or short emails to friends
- ❖ Surf the internet (non-stressful topics only), do research for major purchases (cars, appliances, vacations)
- ❖ Watch movies or episodes of television shows that you haven't seen in a long time (no action films)
- ❖ Take the dog for a long walk
- ❖ Groom your pets
- ❖ Listen to slow, relaxing or instrumental music
- ❖ Gather old bills and statements and shred them
- ❖ Organize collections- photos, old letters, wine, books, or other items
- ❖ Catch up on laundry or folding clothes
- ❖ Polish your shoes
- ❖ Iron or mend clothing
- ❖ Write in your journal
- ❖ Do some stretches to relax your muscles
- ❖ Give yourself a pedicure, manicure or facial
- ❖ Sweep or mop the kitchen floor while no one else is there to walk on it
- ❖ Floss!
- ❖ Knit
- ❖ Quilt

### ❖ **During the night:**

- ❖ Look through catalogs
- ❖ Update your address books or start one online or on paper
- ❖ Sort out junk mail and bills (but don't pay bills)
- ❖ Play solitaire online or with cards at home
- ❖ Catch up on your reading
- ❖ Call friends who live in other time zones
- ❖ Clean out the refrigerator
- ❖ Make a grocery shopping list for the week
- ❖ Create a detailed menu for dinners

- ❖ De-clutter your coffee table, dining room table, kitchen countertops or desk
- ❖ Create a list of activities that you'd enjoy doing on weekends and vacations
- ❖ Work on photo albums or scrapbooks
- ❖ Fold clothes, put away clothes
- ❖ Shop for holiday, wedding or birthday gifts online
- ❖ Read magazines or other light material
- ❖ Make a materials list for a project around the house
- ❖ Choose one or two drawers to clean out (in your desk, kitchen, bathroom)
- ❖ Watch infomercials, C-SPAN, The Weather Channel, or other repetitive television shows
- ❖ Organize collections of CDs or DVDs and choose some to donate or sell if you no longer enjoy them
- ❖ Jot down thoughts on a notepad for an assigned period of time, if you are using this exercise to help decrease nighttime and bedtime thinking and worrying
- ❖ Knit or do other crafts that you can stop working on when you feel sleepy
- ❖ Read your kids' books- these are often very comforting and positive in their messages

#### **Early in the morning:**

- ❖ Meditate or pray
- ❖ Watch the sunrise
- ❖ Take the dog for a walk
- ❖ Read the newspaper or read the news online
- ❖ Go to your gym or workout at home
- ❖ Go to the grocery store or other stores that open early
- ❖ Make lunch for yourself and for everyone else in the house
- ❖ Enjoy being able to get ready for work and kids ready for school without having to rush
- ❖ Sort out some kids' toys and choose things for Goodwill or a yard sale
- ❖ Sort and start your laundry, iron shirts or other clothes for work
- ❖ Start a budget for your family on a spreadsheet or in a notebook
- ❖ Send emails to friends or check your work email
- ❖ Shred or erase old computer disks, DVDs, etc.
- ❖ Organize all of your bills, receipts, coupons and warranty information in a filing cabinet or folders
- ❖ Get some of the preparation started for dinner dishes (marinating, chopping vegetables, and so on)
- ❖ Make the bed and tidy up your bedroom Open the curtains and blinds in the house
- ❖ Sweep your sidewalk or steps, or shovel snow
- ❖ Do some light gardening or water houseplants or those around your porch
- ❖ Review your to-do list for the day or the week





CENTER FOR  
Science IN THE  
Public Interest

Coffees	Serving Size	Caffeine (mg)
Dunkin' Donuts Coffee with Turbo Shot	large, 20 fl. oz.	436
Starbucks Coffee	venti, 20 fl. oz.	415
Starbucks Coffee	grande, 16 fl. oz.	330
Panera Frozen Mocha	16.5 fl. oz.	267
Starbucks Coffee	tall, 12 fl. oz.	260
Starbucks Caffè Americano	grande, 16 fl. oz.	225
Panera Coffee	regular, 16.8 fl. oz.	189
Starbucks Espresso Frappuccino	venti, 24 fl. oz.	185
Dunkin' Donuts Coffee	medium, 14 fl. oz.	178
Starbucks Caffè Mocha	grande, 16 fl. oz.	175
Starbucks Iced Coffee	grande, 16 fl. oz.	165
Maxwell House Ground Coffee—100% Colombian, Dark Roast, Master Blend, or Original Roast	2 Tbs., makes 12 fl. oz.	100-160
Dunkin' Donuts Cappuccino	large, 20 fl. oz.	151
Starbucks—Caffè Latte, Cappuccino, or Caramel Macchiato	grande, 16 fl. oz.	150
Starbucks Espresso	doppio, 2 fl. oz.	150
Keurig Coffee K-Cup, all varieties	1 cup, makes 8 fl. oz.	75-150
Folgers Classic Roast Instant Coffee	2 tsp., makes 12 fl. oz.	148
Starbucks Doubleshot Energy Coffee, can	15 fl. oz.	146
Starbucks Mocha Frappuccino	venti, 24 fl. oz.	140
Starbucks VIA House Blend Instant Coffee	1 packet, makes 8 fl. oz.	135
McDonald's Coffee	large, 16 fl. oz.	133
Maxwell House International Café, all flavors	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbs., makes 12-16 fl. oz.	40-130
Seattle's Best Coffee—Iced Latte or Iced Mocha, can	9.5 fl. oz.	90
Starbucks Frappuccino Coffee, bottle	9.5 fl. oz.	90
International Delight Iced Coffee	8 fl. oz.	76
Maxwell House Lite Ground Coffee	2 Tbs., makes 12 fl. oz.	50-70
Dunkin' Donuts, Panera, or Starbucks Decaf Coffee	16 fl. oz.	15-25
Maxwell House Decaf Ground Coffee	2 Tbs., makes 12 fl. oz.	2-10



CENTER FOR  
Science IN THE  
Public Interest

Teas	Serving Size	Caffeine (mg)
Starbucks Tazo Awake—Brewed Tea or Tea Latte	grande, 16 fl. oz.	135
Starbucks Tazo Earl Grey—Brewed Tea or Tea Latte	grande, 16 fl. oz.	115
Starbucks Tazo Chai Tea Latte	grande, 16 fl. oz.	95
Starbucks Tazo Green Tea Latte—Iced or regular	grande, 16 fl. oz.	80
Black tea, brewed for 3 minutes	8 fl. oz.	30-80
Snapple Lemon Tea	16 fl. oz.	62
Lipton Pure Leaf Iced Tea	18.5 fl. oz.	60
Green tea, brewed for 3 minutes	8 fl. oz.	35-60
Lipton 100% Natural Lemon Iced Tea, bottle	20 fl. oz.	35
Arizona Iced Tea, black, all varieties	16 fl. oz.	30
Nestea Unsweetened Iced Tea Mix	2 tsp., makes 8 fl. oz.	20-30
Arizona Iced Tea, green, all varieties	16 fl. oz.	15
Lipton Decaffeinated Tea—black or green, brewed	8 fl. oz.	5
Herbal Tea, brewed	8 fl. oz.	0

Soft Drinks	Serving Size	Caffeine (mg)
FDA official limit for cola and pepper soft drinks	12 oz.	71 (200 parts per million)
Pepsi MAX	12 oz.	69
Mountain Dew, regular or diet	12 oz.	54 (20 oz. = 90)
Diet Coke	12 oz.	47 (20 oz. = 78)
Dr Pepper or Sunkist, regular or diet	12 oz.	41 (20 oz. = 68)
Pepsi	12 oz.	38 (20 oz. = 63)
Coca-Cola, Coke Zero, or Diet Pepsi	12 oz.	35 (20 oz. = 58)
Barq's Root Beer, regular	12 oz.	23 (20 oz. = 38)
7-Up, Fanta, Fresca, ginger ale, or Sprite	12 oz.	0
Root beer, most brands, or Barq's Diet Root Beer	12 oz.	0

Energy Drinks	Serving Size	Caffeine (mg)
5-hour Energy	1.9 fl. oz.	208
Full Throttle	16 fl. oz.	200
Monster Energy	16 fl. oz.	160
Rockstar	16 fl. oz.	160



CENTER FOR  
Science IN THE  
Public Interest

AMP Energy Boost Original	16 fl. oz.	142
Red Bull	8.4 fl. oz.	80
V8 V-Fusion+Energy	8 fl. oz.	80
Ocean Spray Cran-Energy	20 fl. oz.	55
Glacéau Vitaminwater Energy	20 fl. oz.	50
Starbucks Refreshers	12 fl. oz.	50

Caffeinated Snack Foods	Serving Size	Caffeine (mg)
Crackheads Espresso Bean Candies, hyper	1 box, 40g	600
Crackheads Espresso Bean Candies, regular	1 package, 28 pieces	200
Wired Waffles	1 waffle	200
Perky Jerky	1 package, 1 oz.	150
Arma Potato Chips	1 package, 2 oz.	70
Cracker Jack'D	1 package, 2 oz.	70
MiO Energy, all flavors	1 squirt, ½ tsp.	60
Crystal Light Energy	½ packet	60
Jelly Belly Extreme Sport Beans	1 package, 1 oz.	50
Jolt Gum	1 piece	45

Ice Cream & Yogurt	Serving Size	Caffeine (mg)
Cold Stone Creamery Mocha Ice Cream	Gotta Have It, 12 oz.	52
Starbucks Coffee Ice Cream	4 oz.	45
TCBY Coffee Frozen Yogurt	large, 13.4 fl. oz.	42
Dannon All Natural Coffee Lowfat Yogurt	6 oz.	30
Häagen-Dazs Coffee Ice Cream	4 fl. oz.	29
Stonyfield Gotta Have Java Nonfat Frozen Yogurt	4 oz.	28
Starbucks Mocha Frappuccino Ice Cream	4 oz.	25
Baskin Robbins Jamoca Ice Cream	4 oz.	20
Dreyer's or Edy's Grand Ice Cream—Coffee or Espresso Chip	4 oz.	17
Breyers Coffee Ice Cream	4 oz.	1
Häagen-Dazs Coffee Almond Crunch Snack Size Bar	1.8 oz.	10
Breyer's, Edy's, or Häagen-Dazs Chocolate Ice Cream	4 oz.	less than 1



CENTER FOR  
Science IN THE  
Public Interest

Chocolate Candy & Chocolate Drinks	Serving Size	Caffeine (mg)
Starbucks Hot Chocolate	grande, 16 fl. oz.	25
Hershey's Special Dark Chocolate Bar	1.5 oz.	20
Hershey's—Milk Chocolate Bar	1.6 oz.	9
Hershey's Kisses	9 pieces, 1.4 oz.	9
Hershey's Cocoa	1 Tbs.	8
Dove Dark Chocolate Silky Smooth Promises	5 pieces, 1.4 oz.	4
Silk Chocolate Soymilk	8 fl. oz.	4
Hershey's Chocolate Lowfat Milk, bottle	12 fl. oz.	2

Over-The-Counter Pills	Serving Size	Caffeine (mg)
Zantrex-3 weight-loss supplement	2 capsules	300
NoDoz or Vivarin	1 caplet	200
Excedrin Migraine	2 tablets	130
Midol Complete	2 caplets	120
Bayer Back & Body	2 caplets	65
Anacin	2 tablets	64

December 2012. Most information was obtained from company Web sites or direct inquiries.

Serving sizes are based on commonly eaten portions, pharmaceutical instructions, or the amount of the leading-selling container size. For example, beverages sold in 16-ounce or 20-ounce bottles were counted as one serving.

Additional information: Juliano, L.M. & Griffiths, R.R. (2005). "Caffeine." In Lowinson, J.H., Ruiz, P., Millman, R.B., Langrod, J.G. (Eds.). *Substance Abuse: A Comprehensive Textbook*, Fourth Edition. (pp 403-421). Baltimore: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins.

## **Action Plan for Addressing Insomnia in the Future**

Insomnia can return but now that you know how to address it, you need not worry about whether it returns. What parts of this program seemed to work well for you? Please check all that apply

- Keeping the same wake-up time every day (no matter you much sleep you get)
- Not trying too hard to sleep
- Going to bed when you are sleepy but never before your regular bedtime
- Getting out of bed when you are unable to sleep
- Creating a buffer zone before bed
- Getting out of bed if you find yourself worrying or you cannot shut off your thoughts
- Engage in worrying or problem-solving earlier in the evening
- Limiting the amount of time you spend in bed each night
- Using the bed for sleeping only
- No napping (except for short safety naps)
- Try not to have caffeine or alcohol, smoke cigarettes or engage in exercise within a few hours of your bedtime

Are you currently doing all of the checked recommendations? If yes, and you continue to have problems, please call your therapist and schedule a refresher session.

If you notice new sleep-related problems, please contact your doctor and schedule an appointment. Such problems can include

- loud snoring
- stopping breathing, breathing pauses, gasping or snorting during sleep
- falling asleep unintentionally/dozing during the day
- a creepy-crawly sensation in your lower legs in the evening along with an irresistible urge to move your legs to get rid the sensation
- very frequent leg jerking during your sleep
- any other unusual new sleep experiences

**Remember, you mastered the insomnia before, and you'll master it again.**

