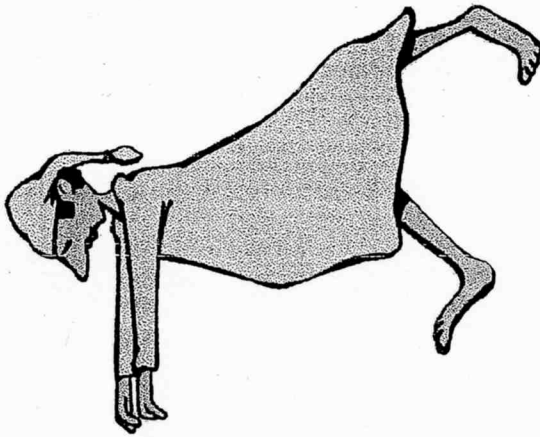


Sleeping Poorly

About one person in three suffers from insomnia, that is, not having enough sleep or sleeping badly. We all have different requirements for sleep. The average amount for adults is 7 1/2 - 8 hours a night but some people sleep well with as little as 3 hours or as much as 10 hours a night.



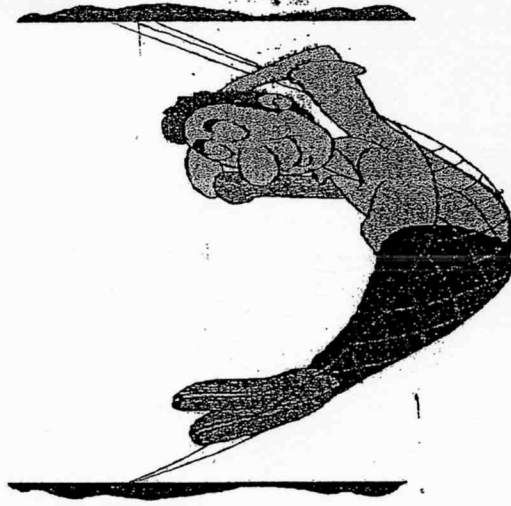
Trying to sleep more hours than you need can actually make you feel more tired.

Sleep and Relaxation

If you take your thinking and worrying to bed with you:

- Try a relaxation exercise before sleeping. Repeat a word, mantra or prayer. Practise a relaxation or meditation exercise from a tape or listen to some soothing music.
- Calm your worries in a warm bath just before going to bed. Try a herbal bath remedy like 5 drops of lavender essential oil or soak with bath crystals.
- Slow down your breathing. Take deep, slow breaths. Concentrate on your inhalation and exhalation.
- Drink a warm glass of milk or chamomile tea before going to bed.
- Set yourself "worrying time". Write down your days worries in a journal before going to sleep. Your mind will become more at ease and will be less likely to need to process your thoughts while you try to sleep.
- Avoid things that upset you just before going to bed. Do something pleasant before sleeping like listening to music, watching a good TV show or taking a bath.

SLEEPING BETTER



STARTTS

NSW Service for the
Treatment and Rehabilitation
of Torture and Trauma Survivors

P.O. Box 203
Fairfield NSW 2165
PH: (02) 9794 1900

The Reasons for Poor Sleep

Sleep problems can occur for a variety of reasons. Sleep problems often begin with an unsettling life event such as illness or death in the family, a car accident or life threatening situation, or an increase of worries at work or at home.

Disturbing thoughts from traumatic events, anxiety or feelings of depression can interfere with your sleep cycle. For example, if you are feeling anxious you may find it difficult to fall asleep or if you feel depressed you may find that you fall asleep easily but wake up in the early hours of morning.

Often the traumatic or stressful situation has changed but the sleeping habit you developed remains. It can be difficult to get out of the disrupted sleeping habit once it has developed.

Worrying about not sleeping is probably the most common cause of not sleeping

Talking to a counsellor can often help if you are not sleeping because of excessive feelings of worry or sadness. Counsellors are trained professionals who are able to assist you with 'talking through' your concerns.

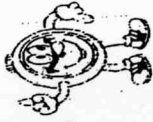
12 Tips for a Better Nights Sleep

1.



Only go to bed when you feel sleepy

2. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day. Our body clock likes regularity!



3. Create a bedtime ritual. For example, eat dinner, do the dishes, take a bath, brush your teeth then go to bed.

4. Keep your room dark, well ventilated and cool, not too warm.

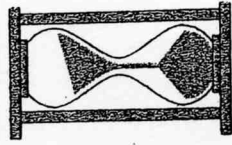
5. Try to keep your body in one position in bed. Avoid tossing and turning.

6. Cut down on excess stimulation from lights or noise. Try ear plugs or cover noise with soft music.

7. Don't read or watch TV in bed. Keep your bed for sleeping.

GET UP IF YOU WAKE UP!

If you wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep within 20 - 30 mins, get out of bed, walk around a bit, drink some non caffeine or non alcoholic drink such as warm milk and try a relaxation technique.



8. Don't watch the clock or count sheep. These activities are stimulating and will keep you awake.

9. Don't eat just before going to bed. Eat 2 - 3 hours before bedtime. Avoid snacking in bed.

10. Avoid caffeine in coffee and tea, alcohol and cigarettes before bedtime. These are stimulants and will make sleeping difficult.



11. Exercise during the day. Early afternoon is a good time for exercising but avoid physical exercise just before going to bed.

12. Don't nap during the day if you haven't slept well, it will only make it more difficult to get to sleep in the evening.