



Overcoming Insomnia

If you've ever suffered from insomnia, you know how debilitating it can be. It's a horrible feeling that seems to keep you trapped in between sleep and awake.

Since you can never get any long-term rest, you never get to fully recharge your batteries. This can have disastrous effects on almost all aspects of your life.

According the US Department of Health and Social Services about 64 million Americans suffer from insomnia. It was also noted that out of the 64 million sufferers that women were 1.4 times more likely to develop insomnia over the course of their lifetime.

In this report, we're going to talk about what insomnia is, what some of its causes are and effective ways to treat it so that you can get back to getting the rest that you need to function in daily life.

By the time you're done reading this, you should have a much better understanding of this condition and determine the steps that you can take to overcome it.

To be able to treat any kind of condition such as insomnia, one must first

have a clear understanding of it. You'll need to examine its causes and how it affects the body. So let's start with what insomnia is.

Insomnia isn't just tossing and turning before you go to sleep. It isn't something that happens just on occasion, as we're all prone to having a lot on our minds and not being able to sleep from time to time.

Insomnia is the inability to get any quality sleep for more than a few hours that lasts for extended periods of time. This lack of sleep causes physical and mental fatigue throughout the day and makes functioning on many levels difficult.

Here are some basic symptoms of insomnia:

Migraines and headaches

Inability to stay focused or concentrate

Waking up several times throughout the evening

Being able to sleep only with the aid of medication

Always feeling tired

Loss of memory

Constant irritability

While there are varying degrees of insomnia and how bad one might have it, there are three distinguishable types of insomnia that can be identified.

Transient insomnia last from days to weeks. It can be caused by depression, changes in your sleep environment, another disorder or stress.

Acute insomnia is the inability to get any meaningful rest for between three weeks and six months.

Chronic insomnia is typically ongoing, lasting for years. Chronic insomnia is often the result of another condition, although it's just as likely that insomnia is the primary condition.

People who suffer from chronic fatigue have been known to show increased alertness. Others have reported that during these times of not being able to sleep at night, their creative abilities increase and they can come up with the most amazing ideas.

Unfortunately, since they're never able to get the rest they need to be able to function, they usually lack the ability to carry through with any of these ideas and therefore they never come to fruition.

It's important to be able to identify what type of insomnia you suffer from so that you can target some of the causes and work toward getting the treatment that you need to beat this condition.

Insomnia also has certain patterns that it follows. For example, some people are unable to fall asleep when they first lay down at night. This is known as onset insomnia.

Middle of the Night Insomnia is exactly what it sounds like. It's characterized by waking up in the middle of the night and not being able to get back to sleep, or waking up too early in the morning.

Although scientists have tried to determine exactly what happens to the body when we sleep, we do know that our bodies need sleep. We know that it heals and restores our bodies and resets our internal clocks.

Those who suffer from insomnia have their internal clocks all messed up.

We know that we need rest. Our bodies tell us that, but our minds just won't let it happen.

Cortisol is the chemical in our bodies that tell the brain when it's time to wind down and prepare for sleep. This chemical typically follows a 24 hour cycle, causing us to wake in the morning hours and to begin to wind down in the evening.

Basically, our bodies have cortisol running through us during the day and that's what keeps us active, alert and creative. As the day wears on and the cortisol levels start to drop, we experience this slowing down of the body as we prepare for sleep.

Typically the human body experiences its lowest cortisol levels about 3 ½

hours after the sun goes down as our bodies prepare to heal themselves. This schedule is how our bodies naturally try to operate, and when they're unable to do so, it puts us at odds with our bodies.

For those who suffer from insomnia, they're always fighting against this internal clock and going against their natural sleep patterns. This is the reason that sufferers are easily confused, unable to focus and stay irritable. Our bodies are out of balance.

Optimal sleep patterns last for seven to eight hours and typically begin around 10 PM. It has been scientifically discovered that when we sleep our bodies strengthen their immune systems and regenerate cells and tissues in our organs.

This process typically lasts for about five hours. This is where insomnia sufferers have the problem. It's well known that the body needs at least four hours of solid sleep to get the recharge that it needs. If you're unable to maintain sleep for that period of time, then you're simply unable to receive the necessary benefits of sleep.

As a sufferer of insomnia, I can remember how it was when I was in bad shape and not getting sleep for weeks on end. Nobody wanted to be around me because I was so irritable all the time. I couldn't focus at work because my mind was just too scrambled.

I didn't want to get out of bed, but I also knew that laying there was going to do me no good either...I wouldn't be able to sleep. It was just awful.

It's one of the most miserable feelings the world, being this tired and not being able to do anything about it, but it can go beyond just misery and not being happy. Insomnia, if untreated for long enough can cause death.

Our bodies **NEED** rest. It's not just something that is desirable. Just as body builders have to rest their muscles after they work out, so must we allow our minds and bodies to rest after the stress of the day.

When we go for a long enough period of time without it, our minds will actually reach a point where they will just shut down and cease to function.

When I found this out, it scared me and made me realize that I had to do something about it, or just being miserable was only going to be the beginning.

So I started doing the research and reading and figuring out this condition and what I could do about it.

There are many factors that come into play when dealing with insomnia and many of them will be life changes that you'll be required to make.

Something that you need to understand is that your insomnia problem is a

very serious one and you're going to have to be willing to do battle with it.

Simply reading this report and being mindful of it isn't going to cure you of this condition. Knowledge is a big part of the battle, but action is what's required for you to truly beat this and start getting the sleep that you need.

Now that we understand the types of insomnia, let's take a look at some of the causes of it. This is the logical place to start and you should be able to identify with some of these causes. I invite you to write it down in a notebook. Don't trust your memory on this. If you're an insomniac, it might not work all that well and you'll need this information later.

I remember not being able to sleep and trying anything that I could. I cut out caffeine, took sleeping pills, made my room as dark as I could, but none of it gave me anymore than temporary relief. Let's take a look at what some of the more common causes for insomnia are.

Anxiety and stress

We all know that stress can kill you. This is one of the methods by which it does so. When you suffer from anxiety and stress, you're always wound up and tense. This slowly erodes your health and parts of your body shut down.

If you live with unmanageable stress in your life, then you never are able to fully relax and this can have dramatic ill effects...one of those is that you can't sleep and it's no wonder.

When you lie down to go to sleep, the main thing that you're trying to accomplish with this is relaxing. If you're able to relax, chances are, you'll fall asleep, but if you're all keyed up and tense, you're probably lying in bed with your mind racing and your jaw clenched. It's just not going to work out for you.

Be careful when assessing if this is the real problem or if the insomnia is what is actually causing the stress. It's a which came first, the chicken or the egg kind of thing, but it's important to make the distinction of what is causing your insomnia.

Room Temperature

If your room is too hot or cold this will make sleep a little tougher on anyone and it's even worse with insomniacs. Make sure that your bedroom is at a comfortable temperature when you sleep but more importantly, make sure that the temperature doesn't vary throughout the night. Your body will be alert to this and signal you to wake up if your room gets too hot or cold.

Lighting

Light in your bedroom is a bigger cause than people might think when it comes to insomnia. While some people can sleep better in a dark room, just as many others sleep better with just a little bit of light in the room.

Play around with the lighting in your bedroom and see if you can find

something that helps you to sleep more soundly. Often times something as small as having some light coming in under the door can make a difference and you'll sleep better.

Diet

Diet is as important to having a balanced body as sleep is, and some of your problems could stem from your diet. There are many conditions that can be almost completely resolved by changing your diet and what you eat.

With insomnia however, you'll want to pay more attention to when you eat more than what you eat. Eating late at night before you go to bed triggers your body to "wake up" so that it can start burning the calories that you've taken in.

This causes your cortisol level to increase and take your body out of the mode that it needs to be in to provide you with proper sleep.

The main thing you need to look out for with regards to what you eat would be caffeine. Caffeine as we all know is a stimulant. It keeps you awake and alert. Obviously you don't want to drink coffee or soda before you go to bed as that will have the opposite effect from relaxing you and getting you ready for slumber.

Even if you stop drinking caffeinated drinks a couple of hours before you go to bed, but you have been drinking them all day, your body will still be

wound up from all of the caffeine.

Caffeine isn't necessarily bad, but like most things it needs to be in moderation. Cut down on it some and see if that helps.

Snoring

Snoring is very annoying to those who are trying to sleep with a loud snorer, but can also be a significant contributor to your insomnia problem as well. Many insomniacs have been surprised when they find out that it is their snoring that actually wakes them up.

This is tough to diagnose since you don't even know that you're doing it.

Many people are actually able to start themselves awake from their powerful snores. Once this is discovered, there are treatments that will make this much better.

Work Schedule

This is a pretty obvious one, but if you're working a night shift, it's tough for your body to be able to shut down during the day light hours to allow you to get the sleep that you need.

Most studies have indicated that people typically have no less than two of these triggers that are causing their lack of sleep.

You've probably already started to recognize what some of your triggers are from reading the list above and that's good. You're going to have to determine all of the factors that are affecting your sleep pattern if you ever hope to return to getting rest and sleep when you need it.

Lets take a closer look at all of this and see if we can find something that will get you back to sleeping well. It will take some work, but if you're willing to apply yourself to this, I have no doubt that you can get this thing beat and get back to normal.

Stress and Anxiety

As we said before, everybody suffers from stress and anxiety at some point in their lives, whether it comes from finances, relationships or wherever. It's how you handle this stress that is the biggest factor.

If you suffer from long term stress, then it may come from past issues that you've encountered, but haven't been able to release or resolve. Resolving these issues can have a huge impact on your sleeping habits.

Take a good hard look at what is causing the stress in your life and start to take steps to alleviate that stress. Doing this can pay huge dividends to you in the sleep department.

If your stress is financial, as it is for many, put in some extra work toward getting your finances straightened out. Seek a credit counselor or whatever

you may feel you need to do in order to get that area of your life straightened out.

No matter what it is, you've got to take proactive steps toward getting the stress off of your mind and finding better ways to deal with your stress in the future.

Talk to friends and family about the problem. They have the ability to look at things from the outside and see problems or causes that you might not be able to pick up on. It's often hard to see our own behaviors objectively...especially when we're deprived of sleep.

If you're not comfortable talking to those close to you, then you can seek counseling for a period of time. These people are trained to help you manage your stress and deal with it more constructively.

Stress, as it turns out is one of the most common insomnia triggers and it really can wreak havoc on your entire life. Do yourself a favor and do some serious thinking and research on stress and anxiety and see if you can come up with what's bothering you.

Insomnia, as most disorders is typically an indication that your body is out of balance. This is the fundamental truth behind most conditions such as insomnia. If you can figure out what areas of your life and health are out of balance, then you'll be on the road to getting that fixed.

Temperature and Lighting

This one is pretty self explanatory. There are many factors in this section that can inhibit your ability to get a good night's sleep.

For example, if your partner wants to watch TV when you're ready to go to sleep, this can keep you from being able to get any rest. Ask them to go to another room to watch TV, or go to another room yourself to sleep.

Lighting is a funny thing with regards to insomnia. Some people do well with a small amount of light in the room while others need for it to be pitch black in the room. This is going to be something that you have to try out a few different ways to see what works best for you.

A large majority of insomniacs who were interviewed discovered that they couldn't sleep in a room that was too hot. A way to prevent this is to turn the thermostat down a little bit before you go to bed. If you have to throw an extra blanket on your bed it's better than not being able to sleep.

Age

Age is one of the causes of insomnia as well. As you get older, your body chemistry changes and some of the things that you need to sleep well aren't produced as much as they were when you were younger.

Understanding some of this is one of the keys to being able to get the rest you need.

One of the ingredients to sleep is melatonin. Melatonin gears your body up for sleep and you start to produce more of it later at night. The older we get, the less our bodies are able to produce melatonin. This can be solved by taking melatonin supplements.

As with any new treatment, you need to consult with your physician before you start to take supplements and they can instruct you on dosage and frequency.

Work Shift

Working the midnight shift is very destructive to your sleep patterns. Our bodies are designed to shut down when it's dark and to be awake when there's daylight out. Working overnight forces your body to go against its natural inclination and many people are unable to handle it.

Try some of these things out and see if you can get them to work for you. If you can't find anything that does though, you're really going to have to consider finding another job. No job is worth sacrificing your health for.

Try cutting off all food and caffeine one hour before you go home. We've already discovered that eating before you go to bed isn't conducive to getting quality rest.

Avoid activity when you get home from your shift. Get yourself into a habit of coming home, taking a shower, and going to bed. You can recondition

your body, but you're going to have to develop another routine to be able to accomplish it.

Make sure that you can get your room properly dark when you're trying to sleep during the day. Dark curtains or whatever it takes will help you to trick your mind a little bit and this will make rest more natural.

There are some herbal remedies that you can consider as well, however insomnia usually comes down to some lifestyle changes that you need to take a look at. In the meantime, here are a few natural remedies you can explore.

Valerian root is the number one herbal remedy although for most people it takes several weeks of use to start getting into your system enough to do the job.

Some others that have been known to help are chamomile, echinacea, and melatonin supplements.

Try some of these out to see if they can help you get some rest. Herbs have been used for centuries to help reduce stress and help keep your body in balance.

Alright, we've give you some tools here that should help you along the way toward getting back to sleep. Let's spend a minute summarizing all that

we've talked about.

The first thing that we have to do is to determine what our triggers are for insomnia. Figure out what type of insomnia you have and try to determine what the root cause is. Talk to friends and family, or to a counselor to get some input.

Once you determine what the triggers are, then you can take steps to alleviate those problems from your life. Examine what you can do to reduce stress in your life, because I can almost guarantee that this is one of the triggers to your insomnia.

Establish routines if you work the overnight shift that will condition your body to get to sleep very shortly after you get home.

Pay attention to light and temperature in the bedroom. These factors can throw your sleep patterns off and cause you to wake up in the middle of the night, or to not be able to get to sleep at all.

Don't eat for a few hours before you go to sleep. This sends your body into a mode of digesting and burning calories and your body won't want to shut down and rest.

Keep all these things in mind and you'll be able to get your sleeping pattern normalized eventually.

Just remember what we've said before, insomnia is a signal to you that your body and life are out of balance. Finding a way to get this balance back into your life will bring your peace and harmony and allow you get the rest that your body desperately needs.