

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR GOOD SLEEP "HYGIENE"

- 1. Keep consistent bedtimes and wake times seven days a week (even after a "bad" night.)**
- 2. A person should only stay in bed equal to the number of hours of sleep he or she is achieving per night (i.e., if you are getting six hours of sleep per night, you should plan bedtime and wake time as six hours apart). Many insomniacs spend far too much time in bed, attempting to "squeeze" out a few more minutes of sleep.**
- 3. If you have difficulty getting to sleep within twenty minutes, get out of bed and do something relaxing and distracting. For many people, this is reading. Do not do housework, bills, work or anything that is too stimulating within two hours of bedtime or during a nighttime awakening.**
- 4. Although some people's insomnia is helped by a nap at midday, for most, it will interfere with falling asleep that night.**
- 5. Avoid alcohol within five hours of bedtime. Alcohol is a poor hypnotic and caused nighttime awakenings.**
- 6. Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, soda, chocolate) after noon. Even if it doesn't prevent you from falling asleep, it can cause shallow sleep or nighttime awakenings.**
- 7. Avoid going to bed on either an empty stomach or a full stomach. A light snack may be of value.**
- 8. Bedrooms should be quiet, safe and relaxing. Clocks should face away from the bed, so as not to "count down" the minutes until morning.**
- 9. Daily exercise will improve insomnia, although the effects may not be immediate.**
- 10. Schedule "worry time" earlier in the day, so as to consider the day's problems and find some resolution before getting into bed.**