

Source: *Shuteye.com*

## **Improving Sleep**

The first step to kicking insomnia is to regain control over your sleep, which means making a few changes to your lifestyle and environment. *Shuteye.com* offers these tips for doing just that:

### **Prepare for sleep by getting your mind into "sleep mode."**

- Relax your body. This could mean meditation, progressive relaxation, or just taking a warm bath.
- Unwind mentally by reading or listening to music.
- Bedtime is not problem-solving time. So that you don't start worrying the second your head hits the pillow, make a list of your problems with "next steps" you'll act on the following day.
- Eat a snack that is high in carbohydrates, such as toast or a bagel. Avoid heavy, spicy, or high-sugar foods.

### **Follow the same schedule every night.**

Go to bed and get up at the same time every day--even on weekends. This is a little trick you can play on your mind and body so both become conditioned to expect sleep at a regular time.

### **Make your bedroom sleep-friendly.**

- Get rid of the noise. That means turn off radios, televisions, and stereos in the bedroom and all other rooms in your house. Can't control the noise? Get earplugs.
- Reduce light. Light not only affects your eyes, it also affects the way your brain produces hormones that regulate your sleep cycle. Even a little bit of light can disrupt your sleep. If you can't control the light, wear a sleep mask to block inside light or install heavy window shades to block outside light.
- Adjust the room temperature. If you're too warm or too cold, you won't sleep soundly. Fiddle with the thermostat, change your pajamas, adjust the bedding, and open or close windows as needed.
- Move the clock. If you can't see the time, it won't make you as anxious if you can't sleep.
- Help the dog or cat find a new place to sleep other than at the end of your bed.
- Does your partner snore or toss and turn--and awaken you in the process? Consider getting a larger bed or even using separate beds.

**Whatever you do, *don't* do these things as they'll keep you awake or disturb your sleep:**

- Exercise within three hours of bedtime
- Smoke
- Drink alcohol before bedtime
- Drink caffeinated beverages after noon
- Drink a lot of liquid before bedtime

**One little trick that might help:**

If you can't fall asleep, try warming your feet by putting on some socks. It helps!