

Our Shared Journey

Stress Is Stealing My Sleep!

How Do I Get It Back?



A Guide to Manage Stress and Sleep

By Mary Francis

Our Shared Journey



Stress Is Stealing My Sleep!

The general rule is that 6-7 hours of sleep is necessary – any less and the resulting drowsiness could make you a danger to yourself and others. There are many sleep disorders that can severely interfere with your life, but one of the main blocks to sleep is your stress level.

- Do you get so tired & stressed that you don't have any energy to care about life?
- Do you keep busy so that you're exhausted at bed time and yet still can't sleep?
- Do you huddle in bed watching the night slip into the morning?
- Is your heart overflowing with emptiness and you can't find peace?

This Guide to Manage Stress and Sleep (# 2 in trilogy) is all about how to handle the stress and the loss of sleep that mentally and physically blocks us from a healthy life. You need sleep to manage all the hills and valleys, potholes and sharp turns you will encounter on your life's journey.

To be clear, I am not a doctor or an expert on stress and sleep disorders. I am however an author that loves to research and extract valuable facts to share with my readers. Seek medical advice if stress and lack of sleep disrupt your life.



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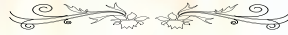
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Why is Sleep So Important?



Below is a list of what can happen when we don't get enough sleep or when our sleep quality is poor:

- Lower concentration.
- Harder to make decisions.
- Irritability and frustration increases.
- Body is sluggish.
- Speech is slurred.
- More accidents occur.
- Physical health declines.
- Mental health disorders worsen.
- The aging process may speed up.

Long-term sleep deprivation can have serious consequences to your health; physically and mentally. There is diminished critical thinking if a person is sleep deprived, which has a direct link to unhappiness and stress.

When to Get Help

- If you continually don't feel restored after sleep.
- You can't fall asleep or stay asleep.
- It's been a problem for several months.
- It's affecting your moods at work and at home.
- Your physical health is declining.

The important thing is to return to your regular sleep schedule as soon as possible. You cannot make up for large sleep losses during the week by sleeping in on the weekends. You just cannot replace lost sleep all at once.

Know Your Sleep Type - Early morning types (Larks) leap out of bed at the crack of dawn, do their best work before noon but become worn out before the evening. The evening type (Owls) cannot get going in the morning but are still going strong way past midnight. Your sleep type is part of your genetic makeup and needs to be understood and accepted.

Normal Sleep



Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) and Rapid eye movement (REM) are the two basic types of sleep.

NREM sleep has four stages:

Stage 1 - is a light sleep that is easily disrupted.

Stage 2 - is a moderate light sleep, your heart rate and brain activity is slower.

Stage 3 - is a deep sleep with slow brain activity.

Stage 4 – deep delta sleep where it is hard for others to wake you.

REM sleep:

Your brain is highly active and you have your most vivid and prolonged dreams here. It's easier to arouse someone from REM sleep than from stage 3 or 4 of NREM sleep. About 20 to 25 percent of total sleep time is in the REM stage.



The Cycle

Stage 1 – up to 10 minutes

Stage 2 – 10 to 25 minutes

Stage 3 – 5 minutes

Stage 4 – 20 to 40 minutes

Repeat

Stage 3 – 1 to 2 minutes

Stage 2 – 5 to 10 minutes

Then REM for 5 minutes

The first REM stage begins about 90 minutes into sleep and then the cycle starts over again. As your sleep cycles progress, stage 3 and 4 get shorter and REM gets longer.

It's normal to have brief awakenings during the night while moving to and from REM sleep. They last only a few seconds and you may not even remember being awakened.

A Night at the Sleep Lab



If you can't sleep, you may want to ask your doctor for a referral to a sleep center. A sleep center with its specialized testing and trained scientists may be able to give you the relief that you need.

During your night at a sleep lab, you will undergo some tests to determine whether you have sleep apnea, narcolepsy, periodic limb movement disorder or other sleep related conditions.

Electroencephalogram (EEG) – an electroencephalograph measures the brain's electrical activity. They attach several electrodes (metal discs) to a person's scalp, and the machine produces an EEG of the brain's electrical activity.

Electromyogram (EMG) – The electromyogram records electrical activity in skeletal muscles. This procedure is also done with electrodes on the skin, usually the chin muscles and the shin muscles.

Electrooculogram (EOG) – This test measures eye movement activity.

Electrocardiogram (ECG) – Continuously records your heart's electrical activity.

Respiratory Monitoring – Monitoring of airflow (to detect sleep apnea) and the monitoring of respiratory effort. A small device called a "pulse oximeter" is placed on your finger to measure ongoing oxygen content in the blood.

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) Titration – Determines how much air pressure is needed to keep the person's airway open and unblocked.

Audiovisual Monitoring – An infrared camera placed above the bed continuously monitors sleep behaviors and sounds to document any abnormalities.

Multiple Sleep Latency Test (MSLT) - Patients taking this test have a history of excessive daytime sleepiness.

Sleep labs are usually located in or affiliated with hospitals, and they have both certified sleep specialists as well as sleep lab technicians on staff. Your sleep study results are usually available a few days after your overnight visit.

Freedom from Stress



- Conflicts within the family or with friends?
- Changes to your life style – death of loved one, moving, loss of job?
- Too many demands on your time?
- No purpose or goals for your future?

This guide helps you recognize the physical and emotional symptoms of stress and provides you with the skills needed to manage that stress so that you can get the sleep you need. The better your resources for handling stressful situations the less likely you are to lose control of your life, leading you to anger or depression.

We all experience stress and a certain level of stress is beneficial as it causes us to take action, but too much stress can lead to lack of sleep which impairs our performance and affects our relationships with others.

When we are stressed we lean towards negative thinking, everything is black or white with no shades of grey to see the positives that may be there. Learn to [challenge your negative](#), irrational thoughts with more positive conclusions.

Signs of Stress

- Difficulty swallowing.
- Aching neck, backache, muscle tension, fatigue.
- Hyper-ventilation, chest pains, panic attacks.
- High blood pressure.
- Indigestion, heartburn, ulcers.
- Weak immune system.
- Feeling irritable, edgy and bad tempered.
- Smoking or drinking too much.
- Feeling apathetic – nothing matters to you.
- Unable to “turn off” worrying thoughts.
- Lack of confidence.
- Feeling like life is not worth living.
- Very emotional and easily crying.
- Putting off seeing friends.
- No outside interests.

Insomnia



Everyone has had those times of watching the clock, noting with misery how slowly the night is passing. Insomnia is repeated difficulty in falling asleep, staying asleep or feeling tired when it's time to get up. In the early morning hours when you're unable to get back to sleep, every worry grows out of proportion.



Who Gets Insomnia?

- One-third of people older than 65.
- Those that tend to worry more.
- 57% of women.
- Psychiatric Disorders – depression & anxiety.
- Physical disorders.
- Alcohol or Drug abuse.
- People that are grieving.

Causes of Insomnia

- Change in routine – bedtime schedule has changed.
- Perimenopause – low levels of estrogen and progesterone.
- Change in environment – recent move or death of a loved one.
- Poor sleep conditions – noisy, too bright, uncomfortable bed.
- Depression or stress – caused by life changes.
- Too active a mind – watching T.V. before bed.
- Worry about sleep – vicious cycle.
- Chronically low vitamin D – not enough sunlight.

Prescription medications combined with therapy may provide the best results for controlling chronic insomnia. Medications are best for immediate relief, while therapy may take several weeks or months. Don't let insomnia become an acceptable part of your life. **Seek medical advice if the problem persists.**

Types of Insomnia



Insomnia, which affect about half the population at some point in their lives, is the most common of all sleep complaints. Many people see it as an annoyance rather than a serious health problem. It can have a major negative effect on your health, quality of life, mood, memory and general quality of life.

General insomnia - is a classification of sleep disorders in which a person has trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up too early. These disorders may also be defined by an overall poor quality of sleep.

Adjustment insomnia - also called acute insomnia or short-term insomnia, disturbs your sleep and usually stems from stress. The sleep problem ends when the source of stress is gone or when you adapt to the stress.

Insomnia due to a drug or substance - this type of insomnia is directly related to the use of any of the following substances: medication, caffeine, alcohol. Your sleep is disrupted by your use of the substance. This type of sleep problem may also occur when you stop using a substance.

Insomnia nonorganic, unspecified - This type of insomnia suggests that known substances and other physical causes of the insomnia have been ruled out. This means that the cause of insomnia is most likely due to an underlying mental health disorder, psychological factor, or sleep disruptive behaviors.

Paradoxical insomnia - is a complaint of severe insomnia. It occurs without objective evidence of any sleep disturbance. People with this disorder often report little or no sleep for one or more nights. A key feature is an overestimation of the time it takes them to fall asleep. They also underestimate their total sleep.

Psychophysiological insomnia -This insomnia is associated with excessive worrying, specifically focused on not being able to sleep. The insomnia may begin suddenly following an event or develop slowly over many years. People with this sleep disorder worry too much about their insomnia and about being tired the next day. As a result, as they worry about falling asleep, they become more and more tense, which makes it less likely that they will be able to sleep.

Chronic Fatigue



Experts have not yet determined all the causes as there are likely to be many. **Chronic fatigue** is a poorly understood flu like condition that can completely drain your energy and may last for years.

Long term chronic fatigue makes you feel exhausted and lethargic with loss of motivation and sleep problems. If not addressed chronic fatigue may erode your ability to cope with everyday life.

Treatment for chronic fatigue is aimed at relieving your symptoms:

- Increase your activities by planning easy tasks every day.
- Keep a diary to monitor your progress.
- Challenge negative thinking that if you can't do it all it's not worth doing.
- Distract worries by focusing on something different.
- Plan a healthy, balanced diet – see nutritionists.
- Drink herbal teas for your symptoms.
- Do some physical exercise for thirty minutes every day.
- Watch less TV and get outside for more sunshine.
- Expect some setbacks but don't let them stop you.
- Socialize with positive people who will encourage you.
- Learn some relaxation techniques.
- Use aromatic oils and massages to relax you.
- Drink plenty of water – less coffee, cola drinks and alcohol.
- Get six or seven hours of uninterrupted sleep every night.
- Don't overextend yourself, learn to say no.
- Seek medical advice about low doses of antidepressants.

When sleep is hard to get we may let our minds wander into thoughts of suicide because we are just so tired of life. Thoughts like this can be tempting when sleep exhaustion has a hold on us. Tell yourself “Don't do it!” & seek help and support.

Panic Attacks



Panic attacks are the most frightening of all stress symptoms and are experienced by approximately one in ten adults.



A panic attack causes your heart to start pounding, you feel dizzy, sweating and shaking, causing you to be terrified that you are going to faint or completely lose control.

It may appear out of nowhere but is usually triggered by an overload of stresses, worries and life events such as the death of a loved one. You may misinterpret a panic attack by thinking you're having a heart attack, dying or going crazy. Once you have one panic attack you are always looking for signs of another, which causes you to become even more anxious and irrational.

Remember that they are unpleasant and frightening but that panic attacks in themselves are harmless. They happen when you are feeling tired or run down and less able to cope with stress.

How to Cope with Panic Attacks

- Remember feelings of panic are exaggerated reactions to stress.
- They are harmless by themselves.
- Distract yourself by studying your surroundings in detail.
- Slow down and focus on the word “calm” – repeating it over and over.
- Accept your feelings, knowing it will be over quickly.
- Take slow, deep breaths; concentrate on breathing in and out.
- Shout out “stop” and deliberately think about something else.
- Break your thought pattern by putting a rubber band around your wrist and snapping it every time you have an unwanted thought.

Worry



When worry interrupts your sleep on a nightly basis, it sets you up for chronic insomnia that can send you towards sleeping pills, alcohol and dozens of coffee during the day.

- Pets - There have been many studies that have shown that people who have pets worry less and have significantly lower heart rates and blood pressure.
- Work Life - Decide how many hours a week are for work and then walk away.
- Exercise - 30 minutes of exercise will use the adrenaline that worry generates.
- Computer - A lot of people with chronic insomnia are tempted to go online before bed but the computer is interactive. You can't just watch without responding and that could be enough stimulation to keep you up half the night.
- News - Don't watch late night news which features all the negatives of mankind. No way will you be able to drift off to a peaceful sleep after 30 to 60 minutes of violence and disturbing news stories.

There is a strong relationship between worry and the loss of a loved one or changes in your life such as moving or the loss of a job.

- Take some [time for yourself](#) before the demands of life get you down.
- Spend time with positive people you really enjoy being with.
- Sign up for activities that are just what you want to do.
- Don't withdraw into your home - instead get out for a walk.

Can you enjoy your own quiet time without being lonely or do you consistently need noise or entertainment? Are you able to enjoy simple things like the sound of rain or a child's laughter?

It is impossible to find your path until you are able to look honestly at who you are today. Too often we view our lives as victims. Although we don't have control over everything that happens to us, we do have control over our responses and how we choose to live our lives.

Anger



Sometimes we are so tense that it takes only the smallest of things to go wrong and we go into a fit of anger.

Anger (which can be the result of too much stress) plus not enough sleep can impact your tolerance level. You may think that you can just “snap out of it” when you get angry but it is much more complex than that. In fact, your anger is the end result of many events leading up to it.

Events and other people do not make you angry – you allow yourself to get angry because of the way you think and the beliefs that you hold. The more rigid your beliefs are, the more likely you will experience anger.

By learning to manage your anger successfully and by communicating your feelings, you are less likely to let resentments build up to anger.

As the pace of life has speeded up everything has become faster. There is a sense of urgency that increases our anger, stress and lack of sleep.

- Deliberately walk and eat slowly.
- Schedule fewer activities each day.
- Go after the soothing feeling created by uncluttered space.
- Learn to laugh at yourself as it chases away stress.
- Find a therapist if your anger is getting out of hand.
- Taking deep breaths triggers stress reduction in your body.
- Listen to classical music to slow brain patterns for relaxation.
- Forgive – not for them but for your own peace of mind.
- Build in time for yourself – 30 minutes of “you” time.
- Take up uncompetitive and trivial pursuits just for fun.
- Concentrate on one thing at a time, don’t be a perfectionist.
- Manage your hostility by keeping a journal of what makes you angry.

When we feel threatened – somebody criticizes us or a family member is impatient, our immediate instinct is to lash back. Instead of being defensive either think, “What can I do to resolve the situation?” or walk away for a few minutes.

Depression



Sadness is a deep emotion but even though it hurts, we still feel alive. Depression differs from sadness: it is a state of feeling emotionally blocked, of feeling dead inside.

- I don't want to see anyone.
- No one really wants to see me and why would they?
- All I want to do is sit and cry.
- I feel as if I'm sinking in a black pit.

Suffering from a loss and all the life changes that come from it can cause stress and ultimately depression. Once you move from stress to depression it's not so easy to just "pull yourself together," as some may suggest.

- Aim to do a simple task each day.
- Keep a diary of your activities, thoughts and feelings.
- Identify negative thoughts and challenge them.
- Talk to others, describing how you feel.
- Do physical exercise, even if it's only a gentle walk every day.
- Think about what you really want to do – examine your goals.
- Write out positive statements to repeatedly say to yourself.

Changes, both big and small, affect your life from the moment you're born till the moment you die. We learn, for the most part, to cope with changes, but major events disturb our routines causing us stress and lack of sleep.

Depression onset is often predicted by insomnia – insomnia usually comes with depression and is usually the last symptom to disappear. If you are feeling down for any length of time, your first step is your primary care physician.

"Insomnia needs to be treated at the same time as depression", as per Sonia Ancoli- Israel, Ph.D., a professor of psychiatry at the University of California at San Diego. "If you treat both the depression and the insomnia you'll get a better, faster response not only to the insomnia but to the depression as well."

Caregiver Stress



It is common for the sleep of a caregiver to become compromised. Sometimes, help for caregivers can be difficult to find but *Hospice Volunteers* go willingly into homes to relieve the caregivers. When the need is there, it is natural to do all that is required for a loved one, but when the need no longer exists, the survivor's underlying sleep and stress problems begin to surface.

Caring for a loved one whose life has been shortened is challenging work that most of us are untrained and unprepared for. The emotions, the worry, the uncertainty about treatments, caring for children and social isolation cause more stress than any one person can handle.

Most of us know [caregivers](#) who just need a little encouragement to live a healthier lifestyle. Take them out to lunch and let them talk. Offer no advice, express concern about their health in a gentle way and spend some meaningful time with them. If ever there was a time in a person's life when understanding, acceptance and a respectful attitude are needed, this is it.

Sometimes, it is helpful to share your story – being exhausted, frustrated and the never ending demands, and in the end it being the most rewarding time of your life. Exhausted and frustrated because you had to do a host of things for which you had no training or experience. Demanding as you make sure they got their rest while handling the endless phone calls, visitors and the never ending juggling of medication.

Caregivers: How to Deal with STRESS



Remember that *Hospice* and *Red Cross* have services that can help and that you're not alone - you don't have to do it all yourself. *Hospice* is a place where people are received with love, caring and the expertise to help them live out their lives free of pain and in dignity.

Bereavement



Take a close look at the emotions listed and understand that you may feel some or all of them. These are all normal and healthy symptoms of the grief process and should be acknowledged.

- **Sadness** – You feel such a deep sadness that you never want to laugh again.
- **Confusion** – You feel like you are losing your mind but confusion, memory loss and the inability to concentrate are normal when grieving.
- **Anger** – It’s common to be angry with others as it may be that the death was also the end of your dreams and future as you knew it.
- **Relief** – You are relieved it is finally over and they are no longer suffering. This is normal so don’t feel guilty.
- **Loneliness** – You may have the “empty nest” experience and it is difficult.
- **Disorientation** – The map of your life has changed. Not only do you not know where you are going, you probably don’t want to go there.
- **Transformative** - You will change, your goals will change and you will see life from a new and different perspective.
- **Don’t Waste the Pain** - Don’t waste the pain is a profound insight that emotional pain was not given to be merely miserable with, but to learn from.



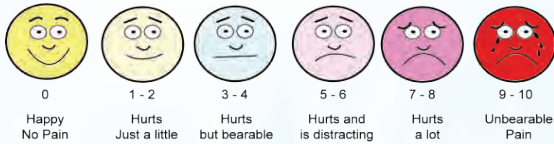
The greatest power we have is the power of choice.
Choose [happiness](#) over unhappiness, positive over negative
and don’t let grief drive you into despair and bitterness.

Are You Living With Pain



If physical pain is constant and is wearing you down, then you probably can't sleep at night which adds to your discomfort and stress. Pain not only interferes with your ability to get a good night's sleep, it actually disrupts the sleep you do get by encouraging your brain to wake you up throughout the night to do something about it. Know your pain levels and how to deal with them.

Pain Levels



The constant stress from pain is depressing as you see the days and weeks ahead with no sign of relief. If you are depressed, angry, anxious or grieving the pain worsens, but if you can relax and be happy your pain threshold will be higher.

Ways to Fight Chronic Pain

- Learn some relaxation techniques.
- Keep a diary of when your pain increases and decreases.
- Plan activities for when the pain is likely to be lower.
- Distract yourself with activities you enjoy.
- Write out positive statements like: "When I relax I feel better".
- Use visualization techniques to control the pain.
- Keep active but don't overdo it.
- Set realistic goals that you can reach.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Work with your doctor for the best approach/medication.
- Try a massage or acupuncture to see if it helps.
- Learn "Pain Imagery Breathing" techniques to control pain.

Drinking, Smoking and Tranquillizers



While **alcohol** can give you great pleasure and make you feel more relaxed, excess alcohol is an addictive drug. It is not uncommon for people to turn to alcohol for comfort when they are stressed or unable to sleep.

Generally if you often drink by yourself, have more than a couple of drinks a day and start drinking early in the day, you should be aware that it could be a problem and try to cut back.

Alcohol is a depressant drug that slows the brain down, dulls your reactions and affects your moods. Alcohol should be an afternoon drink, because if taken later in the evening it keeps you in the lighter stage of sleep. Light noise in the house will likely awaken you.

- Keep a drink diary to see just how much you are drinking.
- Identify your vulnerable times and drinking patterns.
- Pace your drinking – sip, dilute hard liquor, don't stockpile alcohol.
- Don't let others pressure you to social drink, just say "No".
- Try alternating alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic drinks.
- Join AAA or call a buddy.

The **nicotine** in tobacco smooths the nerves but it is a powerful and addictive drug that causes long term damage to the heart, windpipes, lungs, bronchitis, cancer and other fatal illnesses. Tips for quitting:

- Distract yourself – explore new activities or go for a walk.
- Avoid obvious triggers.
- Cut down gradually and ask your doctor for helpful tools.
- Use the money saved to buy something really special.
- Pick a positive time for withdrawal, not in the midst of other changes.
- Establish social support from people who want to see you quit.

Taking **tranquillizers** can make you less anxious in the short term but they only mask the symptoms and don't deal with the real issues. If you take them for a prolonged period of time you may become addicted to the secure, relaxed feeling that they give you. When taking tranquillizers talk to your doctor about the dose and length of time you are comfortable taking them.

Eating Habits and Exercise



Those who eat the most vegetables (antioxidants and vitamins) daily and dine on seafood (anti-inflammatory) two or three times a week enjoy a long, restorative sleep because that combo thwarts two of the most common sleep robbers, pain and sleep apnea. Those that consume diets rich in omega 3 fatty acids, fish such as salmon, are less likely to experience depression than others, reports a Dutch Study.

Don't drink coffee, hot chocolate, soda or tea after your evening meal. These drinks will rev up your brain and reduce the length and depth of your sleep. Schedule your last meal and snack early enough in the evening to give your body at least three hours to digest before going to bed.

The University of Sydney in New South Wales discovered that eating a high carbohydrate meal for supper can cut the time it takes to fall asleep in half.

Some tips to help you sleep:

- Eat a healthy breakfast, large lunch and light dinner.
- Pickles and spicy foods should be avoided at night.
- Take a daily multivitamin.
- Avoid fried foods late at night.
- Deal with problems at once so they don't drag you down.
- Find something to do that will provide positive energy.
- Exercise with others and learn to have fun.
- Satisfying sexual activity can promote sleep.
- Before going to bed have a warm soak in the bath.

Working out within four hours of sleep won't keep most people up. Exercise burns off stress and studies show that those who regularly exercise sleep better than those that don't. Harvard researchers found bedtime yoga calms your body and mind so you sleep soundly.

Take a brisk after dinner walk, play with the kids or do any moderate-intensity exercise and you will fall asleep faster as per Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. It doesn't take much as walking just six blocks at a normal pace can improve your sleep.

Jet Lag and Shift Work



When we get jet lag or do shift work, sleep can be a serious challenge. It makes us groggy, out of sorts and a little confused. It's called circadian-rhythm disorder (CRD) – a serious problem with our internal body clock that regulates sleep and wakefulness.

Our bodies depend on the rise and fall of the sun to get the signal of when it's daytime (time to wake up) and when it's night (time to sleep). Working shifts makes it hard on the body to know when to wake up or when to go to sleep. These workers are at high risk for “shift-work disorder” which leads to higher rate of ulcers, accidents, absenteeism, depression, cardiovascular disease and gastrointestinal disorders.

Some tips on how to handle jet lag and shift work:

- Eat a carb-dense meal – the carbs boost your ability to sleep.
- Lower area temperature - lowers body temp to signal the body to sleep.
- Sleeping pills – good for overnight flights, not everyday use.
- Modafinil (Provigil) – prescribed to combat sleepiness in shift workers.
- Melatonin – is non-prescription, use occasionally to make you sleepy.
- Meal times – stay on the same eating and sleeping schedule.
- Schedule – when travelling, go to bed and wake up at the local time.
- Chronotherapy – therapy to capitalize on the person's intrinsic rhythm.
- Sleep in darkness – wear a sleep mask or use light blocking shades.
- Fly a day early – this gives you a day to adjust your body's clock.
- Drink lots of water – stay hydrated by not drinking alcohol on the plane.
- Fly first class – you need to have space for stretching to keep blood flowing.

Some medical experts recommend only two sleeping positions: sleep on your side, with the spine straight or on your back, maintaining the natural curve of your spine. Sleeping on your stomach or with head elevated may cause aches and pains.

Lack of Time and Money



Time is the most important resource we have and yet we let it slip by us and then lay in bed worrying about what didn't get done. According to the Pareto Principle 20 percent of our effort brings us 80 percent of our rewards, so identify and work on that 20 percent for a high return on your time.

- Be realistic about what you must do and what you want to do.
- Organize your life to balance between work, home and social.
- Identify the best use of your time and money.
- Delegate what you don't know to others, but monitor its progress.
- Learn to say "no" when it isn't in your best interest.
- Do one task at a time and finish it.
- Know your prime time to deal with finances –morning or evening.

Lack of money is a constant worry causing stress and loss of sleep for many people. Juggling bills and avoiding creditors is stressful plus your worries will threaten your life style and how you relate to others.

If you are experiencing money problems, you need to analyze your finances with a specialist. You cannot leave your money to look after itself – you need to know what comes in and what goes out. Be clear about what you want from life and make realistic plans to make it happen. Are you shopping out of boredom or to make you feel better? It will only add to your stress and lack of sleep as you lay awake wondering how you are going to pay this month's bills.

Manage Your Money

- Keep track of every dollar you spend – know where it goes.
- Keep everything organized in one safe place.
- Plan ahead for yearly expenses – insurances and holidays.
- Put aside a small amount every month for emergency fund.
- Ask questions about the fees you are paying and try to lower them.
- Pay off your smallest balanced credit card first and then add that payment to the next credit card and so on till they are all paid off.

Do You Postpone Decisions?



Some people keep putting off what needs to be done, thus causing stress and anxiety to build up. It's easier for them to postpone making a decision than to make a decision. Excuses range from "not having the time" to waiting for someone else.

Tackling unpleasant situations slowly is much more painful than just jumping in with both feet and getting it done. Put the task in your calendar and don't let anything stop you from doing it.

Take **three pages** and on each page write **one** of these on the top.

"Do Now" – "Do Later" – "Do Whenever"

List all the decisions you have to make on the page you think it belongs. Now list all the tasks that are involved in that decision. Make notes about why and who this might also affect. Use this as a work plan so that you can make an educated decision. Before you know it your list of things "to do" is done and they were done at your pace.

Every time you make a decision cross it off your list and you will feel like you have accomplished something. It will make you feel good about yourself. Savor the moment when it's done.

Write out all the problems that you are worrying about and your plans to solve them. Then let it be. Often the fact that you wrote them out is enough to unburden the mind and bring peace to your sleep.

Writing it out will give you a chance to look back over this period of your life and see how you have progressed. Your writings will become filled with your life – the pain, laughter, events and most importantly how it all came together to make you the person you are today.

Take an honest [assessment of your present life](#) and see where you may be out of balance. When you know what you want, are comfortable with who you are and can focus on a goal, you'll find harmony in your life. Awareness has to come first before you can make the decisions needed to relieve your stress and start sleeping well.

What Are Your Goals?



What gives you the best value for your time? That indicates what you should do. Remember time spent is forever gone - it's not like money that can be earned.

Don't let fear get in your way. Maybe more to the point is - what would you like to leave as a legacy? Do you live life to the fullest? After you're gone what would you like people to say about you?

Ask yourself: What do I want to do with the remaining years of my life?

You are free to be yourself without trying to please your parents or grown children. You may be here to be the very best parent/grandparent there is or do some volunteer work that is calling your name. Whatever it is, you find yourself when you have a purpose or goal that you're working towards.

Close your eyes and vision your goals. Where do you want to live? What would you like to weigh? What do you want to do in the next 6 months? Where would you like to travel? Would you like to meet new people? Pay off a bill? Learn a new skill?

Assume control of your life and you will be happier. This might be a good time to get some uplifting and inspiring art for your walls. Surround yourself with objects from nature and plants with bright colors to liven up your home. It can be fun to take charge of some easy remodeling and painting. It will give you a boost to clean out a room and rebuild it with fresh paint, plants, new artwork and less clutter.

It may take energy you don't feel like you have, but just getting up and doing this as a project will make you feel like your accomplishing something. That feeling will help you move on to the next project and give you something positive to plan for.

We often express bewilderment at the lack of understanding from friends and families. Time and time again I hear this refrain: "but they don't understand". Some friends are incapable of understanding your goals and offering support. Perhaps as time goes by your relationship with old friends will change to suit your new life, but don't be surprised if some old friends drift away.

Simplify Your Life



Look over your priorities and see [what is really important](#) to your work, family and future. Pare down on everything else.

Simplify To Reduce Stress



When we go to bed most of us go with our minds full of “what if’s” or “why did I...” and “what has to be done tomorrow.....”. This type of agitation ignites the stress that keeps us from the deeper levels of restorative sleep that we need.

- What’s important to you?
- How do you make decisions?
- How do you affect those around you?

Think about what you have to do and what’s important to you and if they match then that is where you put your energy. If they don’t match take a deep breath and start crossing things off your “to do” list. Know what you want to do.

Manage your cell phone and computer time. Technological innovations make taking work home too easy, giving the workplace no boundaries. We check work emails and voice mails until we go to bed and keep our work cell phones on all day and night. This access to perpetual work issues has a negative effect on how much sleep we get. Don’t check emails just before bed as the light from your monitor can reset you to “wake” cycle and postpone the onset of sleep.

Making time for at least one 5 minute heart-to-heart with your loved one or friend every day is one of the most effective ways to deepen your sleep. Because sharing what is on your mind lowers stress and boosts your mood – both key factors for getting a good night’s sleep. Simplify by [not sweating the small stuff](#) and the saying is “it’s all small stuff”.

Laughter is the Best Medicine



A good knee slapping laugh with friends, playing with your grandchild or having a new adventure, these will take stress away and help you get a better night's sleep.



Many experts say that laughing even in the hardest of times is good for you, mentally and physically. Laughter will release your stress, strengthen your immune system, improve sleep, lower your tension and give you a boost. You can't hold onto tension when you are laughing.

[Small changes](#) can be enough to see significant improvement in sleep. Taking action steps is the key – just wishing for things to change isn't going to cut it.

Smiling at yourself in the mirror - a University of Pennsylvania study shows that looking at any happy face, including your own, can give your mood a dramatic and lasting boost by activating the area of the brain associated with positive emotions.

Happy people allow themselves to be happy. They start their days with the expectation that it's going to be a great day. The pessimist on the other hand just knows that they are going to have a miserable day and they are usually right.

- What have you done for fun lately?
- If you could do anything, what would you do?
- Do you think that spending money on fun is an “Okay” expense?
- Have you turned down a chance to play with friends? Why?

Fun is a necessary part of self-care and has a positive impact on your health and well-being. **Laughter will release your stress, strengthen your immune system, improve sleep, lower your tension and give you a positive boost. You can't hold onto tension when you are laughing.**

Napping

Half the world's population naps during the stretch from 1 to 4 p.m. in the afternoon. Naps will make you feel better, says Sara Mednich, Ph.D., a sleep medicine researcher at the University of California at San Diego. A daily nap of 20 to 60 minutes before 4:00 p.m. will increase your mental performance, reduce your chances of gaining weight and it won't affect your night time sleep.



To start, lie down at the same time every day. That way you teach your body that it's okay to relax in the middle of the day. Set your watch or alarm to wake you up and enjoy your quiet down time.

- Increases your alertness.
- You make more accurate decisions.
- Regenerates your skin cells.
- Helps you lose weight.
- Reduces your risk of heart attacks or stroke.
- Lifts your mood.
- Boosts your brains creative thinking.
- Relieves migraines.
- Makes you feel all around good.

“People who nap generally enjoy better mental health and mental efficiency than people who do not.” Andrew Weil, M.D.

Famous nappers: Napoleon Bonaparte, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill and Presidents; Kennedy, Regan and Clinton. Taking a nap will help to quiet your mind so that you can clearly see how to solve your problems, putting everything in its place so that you can lessen your stress and enjoy living.

If you can't nap don't worry, just the act of relaxing and being quiet with your eyes closed will be beneficial to restoring your energy.

Alternative Therapies



Some things to try on your own:

Dim light exposure: At least two hours before you go to sleep lessen your light exposure. This will slow you down and will quiet your mind.

Melatonin therapy: Research published in the journal “Sleep” indicates that a low dose (even 0.3 mg) of melatonin taken as a pill shortly before going to bed can have a hypnotic effect as melatonin is the “dark hormone” that promotes sleep.

Sleep in a dark room: It helps to use a sleep mask or light blocking curtains. If your eyelids flutter open as you move from one sleep stage to another, even street lights or a full moon can wake you up. Get rid of light displays on clock radios or turn it away from you so that you can’t see it throughout the night.

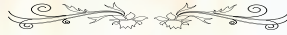
Timing: It’s important to go to bed and get up at the same time each day. If you wake up in the middle of the night don’t toss and turn for hours before falling asleep again. Get out of bed and go read a book until you feel sleepy again.

Wake Up: Sunlight activates the brain to be more alert and awake. Open your curtains when you get up to let your brain know that it’s time to wake up.

Mattress: The mattress that allows you to sink into a deep, natural sleep and wake up refreshed is the one you want. Find a mattress shop that offers expert advice on the different types available. Mattress retailers recommend replacing the mattress every 7 to 10 years.

Temperature: For restful sleep, keep your bedroom between 60 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. If you have cold feet wear toasty socks to bed to fall asleep faster. Wear loose, oversized pajamas so body heat can easily escape, not get overheated.

Spiritual Health



Our spiritual journey may be put to the test as we ask why God does not help us. Faith gives us the strength to believe that our lives will get better and that we will find joy again. Take time to adjust to the changes in your life and use your faith to control the amount of stress and worry you hold onto.

Ask with faith for blessings in detail – be clear, be specific and define it. For some a spiritual life is a religious role within a church community and for others it is a sense of peace that comes from spending time in nature, meditation or different spiritual practices.

“Spiritual well-being” means different things to different people but there is no denying that most people want to feel connected to a Divine presence in some way. You may want to seek help from your church friends, religious or spiritual leaders.

When you are committed to taking extremely good care of yourself, you are saying that you have value. This may sound completely opposite to what you have always heard but self-care begins with learning to be selfish. The word “selfish” has a negative feel to it but when you put your needs first you will have the extra energy needed to be there for others.



Take ten minutes at the end of your day to write out and give thanks for every blessing you had that day. Even if it was only one thing, celebrate that one thing. Be thankful in prayer for all that you get and stop comparing yourself to others. Seek self-acceptance for who you are – just as you are.

Your sense of gratitude will set a serene tone for your night’s sleep and reduce your stress hormones. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention there is a strong correlation between the amount of sleep a person gets and their level of happiness.

The Breathing Cure



The average person breaths in and out up to 23,000 times a day, but most of us only take short, shallow chest breaths. We are all born breathing from our bellies but as we grow older stress causes us to breath from our chest. Breathing in slowly and deeply while filling your lungs and then breathing out slowly for 20 minutes before bed is shown to deepen sleep and lessen nighttime awakenings.

Andrew Weil, MD, director of the Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona, recommends this breathing technique:

- Place the tip of your tongue just behind your upper teeth and keep it there.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a gentle whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose for a count of four.
- Hold your breath for seven counts.
- Follow with an eight count whoosh exhale through the mouth.
- Complete three more cycles, repeating every five minutes till you drift off.

How do you view Change?

- Do you see change as an adventure or to be avoided?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages?
- What plans can you make for the change to be easier?
- Do you research and take the time to think the matter over?
- Do you visualize the results you want to achieve?

Deep breathing with positive statements – take five deep breaths and as you count each breath say to yourself, “I’m getting more relaxed, peaceful and serene. I’m slowly falling asleep.” Focus on this one message over and over again.

Pain Imagery Breathing: When we experience pain, we often hold our breath, which can contribute to inflammation through the release of the stress hormone cortisol. Try this: Close your eyes and imagine your body relaxing. As you breathe through your belly, visualize oxygen filling any areas of tension with comfort and calm. Picture the pain leaving with each out going breath.

Nightwave Sleep Assistant: You breathe in and out in sync with a pulsating soft blue light projected on your ceiling by the machine. It helps you to focus and relax.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



The best kept secret in sleep medicine is a pill-free treatment called **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for insomnia (CBT-I)** which targets the thoughts and behaviors that mess up your sleep. A recent study shows that CBT-I has helped 86 percent of insomniacs improve their sleep. However, there is one big challenge in that there are only a few hundred CBT-I practitioners available.

Changing habits of thought requires conscious effort and practice and often outside help. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) traces its origins to the teaching of Buddha and a Greek philosopher, Epictetus. To live in accordance with nature is to not judge everything that happens as good or bad and to learn what is within your power to change and what is not. It is a mind-over-body approach that's proven to work better than prescription sleep drugs for some people.

In a study at the University of Laval in Quebec, researchers measured the effects of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) on insomnia and found that insomnia practically disappeared. "CBT" is simply learning new information about what keeps you from sleeping and learning how to manipulate your behavior so that it doesn't.

To find a Certified Cognitive Behavioral therapist visit the academyofct.org

To try **Guided Imagery** - turn off the lights, snuggle into bed and use imagery to seduce the brain into seeing and thinking about positive places and things. These images will persuade the stressed part of your brain that it's time to calm down. Some people use nature's music or guided imagery CD's to help them.

Every time you start thinking about things that you can't change or problems on your "to do" list, stop and **focus on something else that is positive and fun.**

- Plan out your garden for next spring.
- Visualize yourself floating above the earth in a hot air balloon.
- See yourself walking along a quiet path leading into a peaceful valley.
- Imagine yourself on a tropical beach with warm sun and breeze.

Hypnotherapists and guided imagery practitioners can help a person learn to relax using visualization techniques.

Meditation



Many studies have demonstrated that **meditation** will reduce stress and anxiety. By practicing right before bed you should reach a deep, restorative sleep.



Here's the method by Herbert Benson, M.D., a cardiologist from the Mid/Body Medical Institute in Boston.

- Choose a positive word that has a deep personal meaning for you. Example "peace" or "one".
- Breathe in easily through your nose – as you exhale, silently say your special word. Begin to consciously relax, focus back on your word for another 10 to 15 minutes. Then allow yourself to gently move into sleep.
- Close your eyes and focus your attention on your special word. When your attention wanders, as it will, bring it back to your special word, repeating it over and over again.
- Meditation is nothing other than focused attention, directed inward or outward – to the breath or to an external visual focus or to a silently spoken word or phrase.

Think and talk positively about yourself because without a strong self-image, it's hard to move forward. You need to focus on creating a healthy self-image. Discouraging feelings keep you focused on what you can't do instead of what you can do. Sometimes we just need to be sad and to be listened to – a hug wouldn't hurt either. You can't make the past better because "it is what it is". Accept that you can't fix everything – sometimes life just isn't fair.

Natural Remedies



Andrew Weil, M.D. in his book “Healthy Aging” says that the two best natural sleep aids are valerian (herb) and melatonin (hormone). Melatonin declines with age and a number of experts advocate melatonin replacement therapy for older people. Andrew suggests taking melatonin at bedtime about every fourth night or twice a week.

Sleep medicines tend to be most helpful in short term. They can get you out of sleep trouble in a crunch and prevent long term sleep issues. But to be really effective, they should be coupled with other good sleep strategies. Refer to this booklet for alternative methods such as getting up the same time every morning, keeping the room dark and writing in a sleep journal.

Antidepressant medication, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT) are the three approaches doctors often suggest for major stress/depression. There are many different medicines that will also help so take your time and talk about each option with your doctor. Your doctor may refer you to a sleep center for testing, diagnosis and treatment.

Acupressure – Traditional Chinese medicine doctors prescribe foot massages to cure insomnia by activating areas of the brain that help you relax and many scientific studies prove it really works. Also, soaking your feet in warm water with lavender bath salts for 20 minutes, 90 minutes before bed will help you sleep.

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) – night-time tingling, aching or prickling feelings in the legs that disrupts sleep. Natural remedies include wearing wraps that massage the calf muscles, these devices improve circulation to nerves. As many as 75 percent of all RLS sufferers are low in iron and need to take supplements. The herbal sleep remedy Valerian also acts like a sedative to quiet the nervous system that causes the legs to feel tingly and restless.

Don’t take sleep-enhancing medications without seeing your doctor. They are not all the same in potency and may have side effects. Never take more than the recommended dose and never combine more than one. Always inform your doctor if you are taking any natural remedies or medications not prescribed by him or her.

Prescription Drugs



Listed below are a few of the most common concerns you may have while taking a sleep medication and what you can do about them.

Many people worry that, should they decide to take sleeping pills, they'll feel tired, fuzzy-headed or dizzy; experience headaches or nausea; or have trouble waking up the next morning. These side effects are possible, but avoidable, says Ralph Downey III, PhD, Director of the Loma Linda University Sleep disorders Center in Loma Linda, Calif.

If you take your medications at the time and correct dosage according to your doctor's instructions, the medication should work effectively without any morning hangover, dependence or other side effects.

Patients are often nervous about becoming addicted to or dependent upon sleeping pills. But studies show that the risk of sleeping pill abuse is decreasing as new medications are released. However, addiction and dependence are still possible with some drugs, especially benzodiazepines.

Taking sleep medications long-term can mask the real cause of insomnia—such as poor sleep habits or too much stress. Patients often tell their doctors that they're dependent on medication, but it's possible they haven't addressed underlying issues affecting their sleep and that as time passes they won't need the pills.

One of the most important things to know about sleep medication is how and when to stop taking it. Stopping the use of a sleep aid can cause rebound insomnia, meaning you may experience the same or even worse symptoms of your sleep disorder without medication.

Patients should **never stop using a sleeping pill without first consulting their doctor**. Many doctors will wean their patients off sleep medications by prescribing lower doses or different medications, until they're ready to sleep on their own.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is one of the most effective ways to relieve symptoms of menopause that interfere with your sleep. By replacing estrogen and progesterone that the body no longer produces naturally, HRT can improve sleep.

Therapeutic-Grade Essential Oils



There are stages that we go through in working through our stress to a place of acceptance and eventually to moving beyond our pain to living our life once again. Essential oils can help calm us and naturally enable a better night's sleep.

What Oils Are Helpful?

Lavender– (*Lavandula angustifolia*)- one of the most popular essential oils for stress relief on the market. It is easily obtained and quite inexpensive. Lavender oil promotes relaxation, helps invoke sleep and is helpful treating stress headaches and depression. It is very effective for insomnia and nervous tension. You can directly inhale or diffuse this oil and apply it diluted on the skin for a massage.

Bergamot-(*Citrus bergamia*)- the medical properties of this oil are calming. Bergamot offers hormonal support and is antidepressant. The citrus fragrance relieves anxiety and has mood lifting qualities. It can be used for agitation, depression, and insomnia. It can be diffused or directly inhaled.

Roman Chamomile-(*Chamaemelum nobile*)-the medical properties of this wonderful oil include being relaxing, antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, and it detoxifies blood and liver. It can be used for relieving restlessness, anxiety, depression, insomnia, and skin conditions such as dermatitis. The fragrance may also dispel anger and stabilize the emotions. You can diffuse it or inhale directly as well as apply it directly to the skin in a dilution or carrier oil.

Rose – (*Rosa officinalis*) – All parts of the rose plant are useful: rose hips provide immunity-boosting vitamin C; the leaves are a laxative and the beautiful rose essential oil is a rejuvenating skin tonic and mood-enhancer. To soothe grief, depression or insomnia, add 2 drops Rose Essential Oil to a warm bath and rest in it for 20 minutes.

Herbs For Stress



Stress is the body's natural reaction to any situation that is causing it pain and placing extra demands on it. Long-term stress can put strain on the nervous system and other areas of the body that may be weak or prone to reacting to stress. Herbs can give you the energy needed to make positive choices in stressful situations.

Nerve tonics, such as **wild oats**, **skullcap** and **vervain** can be taken as teas to help strengthen the nervous system. **Valerian** is the root of the plant “*valeriana officinalis*” and is a natural sleep aid. Most people find it a very satisfactory hypnotic with no adverse effects. Take daily as teas or tinctures to help lift the spirits and replace nutrients.

Herbal baths in lavender, rosemary or chamomile also help to ease tensions. Seek out the professional advice of a Certified Herbalist for more information on herbs that help with stress and lack of sleep.

Ginseng is another important nerve tonic that is used when there are other symptoms of weakness. Ginseng helps to improve the body's ability to adapt to different situations, enabling it to avoid reaching a breaking point or collapse. If you are suffering from depression try a daily herbal decoction of ginseng. Take it as a decoction, tea, tincture, or powder in capsules.

The University of Maryland Medical Center states that **passionflower** has shown in a few studies to work as well as some of the benzodiazepine medications that are usually prescribed for treating anxiety. Bonus – side effects like daytime drowsiness were fewer with passionflower. A second study also showed that passionflower helped ease symptoms like anxiety, irritability, agitation and depression in participants going through withdrawal from an opiate drug addiction.

Herbal Teas



In a British study, people who drank tea four times a day for six weeks calmed down more quickly in stressful situations than those who didn't drink tea.

Black, green and oolong teas all contain theanine, an amino acid that helps the brain and body relax. Drink infusions of lime blossom, chamomile, passionflower, hops, hyssop, or motherwort to replace caffeine drinks.

When it comes to choosing **herbal tea**, it's important to look for a well-sourced product made from high-quality ingredients. And to really get the full benefits from drinking herbal tea, make sure you steep your loose tea or tea bags as long as recommended - to really bring out all the healthful properties.

Green tea polyphenols (GTP) appear to negate the increased oxidative stress that affects brain tissue in areas involved in learning and memory in people with OSA, reports the study, published in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*. GTPs are known to possess antioxidant properties.

Chamomile tea - A gentle calming and sedative tea made from flowers, chamomile tea can be helpful for insomnia. It can also be helpful with digestion and your nervous system.

Lemon balm tea - An easy-to-grow plant, lemon balm is helpful for lifting the spirits. This herb also makes a refreshing iced tea and can be flavored with lemon or maple syrup.

Peppermint and Ginger tea – relieve the symptoms of abdominal gas and bloating and to relieve muscle spasms. Make fresh ginger tea by simmering a piece of ginger root on the stove for 10 to 15 minutes.

Keeping a Sleep Journal



According to a recent poll by the American Psychological Association 45% of adults say stressful thoughts keep them up at night. If that sounds like you, try keeping a sleep journal to start you on a journey of self-reflection. You can write out **your feelings** - angry, lonely, and unhappy with the way things turned out. You will find comfort in putting your thoughts in writing and please don't be a critic of your writing skills.



Don't listen to your inner critic telling you what you should or shouldn't write. Just start writing and don't stop. Put all your focus on filling out the page and before you know it you will be on the second and third page. If you lose yourself in the experience you will soon uncover thoughts and feelings that you were not even aware of.

Your journal will give you a chance to look back over this period of your life. Your journal will become filled with your life – the pain, the laughter, the significant events, the searching questions of why life is the way it is and most importantly how it all came together to make you the person you are today.

If you want to improve your perspective on life and clarify issues, start writing in a journal. You can't know where you're going if you don't know where you are. Be sure your journal will remain private by writing for your eyes only.

Try the techniques in this guide for a few weeks and keep a journal on them. See what works and doesn't work for you. We are all different and it takes time, so be patient with the process.

Products That May Help You Sleep



- **Noise reducers** - can be packaged differently, but overall the goal is to reduce outside noise by creating ambient or white noise. White noise may be helpful to people that are very sensitive to noise.
- **Adjustable Beds** - Have you ever seen commercials for adjustable beds and wondered if they really invoke a good night's sleep? According to studies, they actually do work and are effective in reducing pain.
- **Sleep mask** - We are designed to sleep in the dark and if you are sleeping in an area with light or work nights, a sleep mask will help solve that problem.
- **Aromatherapy** - The use of essential oils, for psychological and physical well-being may be worth your while, but only if 100% grade oil. Lavender has been shown to induce a feeling of calm when put on your pillows.
- **Relaxation music** - As a rule, background noise is distracting, though relaxation music has an element of white noise to it, so the proof is in the "ear" of the beholder. Music takes the mind off worrying, helping us to relax.
- **Pillows** – A good pillow supports in the right places. Life of a pillow: feather is 8 to 10 years, down filled 5 to 10 years and polyester is 6 to 12 months.
- **Mattress** - Often people will sleep better by replacing an old mattress (7 to 10 years), since a worn out mattress can be uncomfortable for sleeping. For more information on this research online "How To Buy The Right Mattress".
- **Sheet sets** – 100 percent cotton is a better choice because it breathes more, but linen sheets are ideally suited for hot climates. People with allergies can be sensitive to soaps and softeners. Alternatively, many insomnia patients like soft, sweet-smelling sheets to help induce a feeling of relaxation. Consider hypoallergenic bedding if you are allergic to dust mites.
- **Night wave Sleep Assistant:** You breathe in and out in sync with a pulsating soft blue light projected on your ceiling by the machine.
- **Indoor air purifiers** – Purifiers can help, especially when people suffer from allergy symptoms and nasal congestion. If you don't have these symptoms, however, an air purifier really won't positively impact your sleep.

It should be noted that if troubled sleepers have tried over-the-counter therapies and continue to wake up tired, they should see a doctor.

Resources on Stress and Sleep



[AARP and CARP](#)

These are membership organizations delivering value to people age 50 plus.

[Ask.com](#)

This is a great resource website for articles on just about anything.

www.dropsOfmercy.com

A detailed resource site for health advice, including stress and sleep.

[Canadian Seniors](#)

This Canadian web site has lots of helpful links and information for seniors.

[Dr. Weil](#)

Dr. Weil is a leading expert on healing through healthy lifestyle.

[Sleep Country](#)

Read about sleep and leading edge research in their "Sleep Experts" section.

[The Mayo Clinic](#)

This is the link to the Mayo Clinic Hospital Sleep Disorder Center.

[The John Hopkins University](#)

The John Hopkins University Sleep Disorder Center for information.

www.thesisterhoodofwidows.com

Resource website with many articles and blogs about stress.

[Prevention Magazine](#)

Magazine – Health news, recipes, workouts and life skills in every issue.



Our Shared Journey Trilogy

1 - A Guide on Grieving to Healing

- Emotionally everyone handles their grief differently.
- Shows you how to deal with grief so that you can heal.
- Provides tips and support for moving forward in a positive way.

2 - A Guide to Manage Stress and Sleep

- This is the ultimate guide on stress and lack of sleep.
- Learn how to manage your stress so that it doesn't control you.
- Understand what you can do to get a good night's sleep.

3 - A Guide to Healthy Relationships

- Explains the physical and emotional pain of loneliness.
- Shows you how to let go of relationships that are hurtful.
- Provides you with the skills needed to create new friendships.

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