Tips To Conquering Insomnia

For many, the suffering from insomnia is due to stimuli surrounding sleep that causes tension and arousal. The following rules are designed to help re-establish the ability to fall asleep quickly.

1. Establish a regular sleep schedule. This sleep schedule should include both bedtime and wake time, whenever possible.

2. Establish a consistent pre-sleep routine. It’s important to do the same things each and every time before you go to sleep - this way, you can establish a routine.

3. Avoid caffeine within 3-4 hours of bedtime. It is best to avoid caffeine altogether from early afternoon on if you are caffeine sensitive.

4. Avoid alcohol near bedtime. While alcohol may make you drowsy, it will disturb overall sleep.

5. Avoid nicotine near bedtime. Nicotine acts as a stimulant to delay sleep while nicotine withdrawal may awaken you later.

6. Eat a light snack—primarily light carbohydrates—prior to bedtime. Being either too full or hungry can disrupt sleep.

7. Create a comfortable sleep environment. Here are some recommendations… dark curtains, white noise, comfortable temperature (cooler is better), comfortable bedclothes and bedding.

8. Stick to your routine while on the road. When traveling, take as much of your routine with you as practical.

9. Strive for a bedroom friendly environment. Insomnia, in part, results when we teach ourselves that the bed, or bedroom, is unfriendly—a place to worry.

10. Get up if you can't sleep. If you can't fall asleep within approximately 30 minutes, or wake up early, don't lie in bed. Get out of bed, go to another room and read or indulge in some other activity that induces sleep.

11. Move your clock. Turn clocks in your bedroom so they are not viewed from the bed. Checking time can be a barrier to sleep.

12. Exercise can help facilitate sleep. However, exercise too close to bedtime stimulates and prevents sleep onset.

13. Practice healthy habits. Having an appropriate exercise program and eating a nutritious diet generally aid in good sleep.

Relaxation Techniques

Here are other techniques that can be valuable to healthy sleep and general stress reduction. Find a program that works for you and use it. Relaxation tapes and meditation, are among the many relaxation options for reducing stress and enhancing sleep.

If you are still unable to overcome insomnia, it is important to know there are additional steps you can take. Get support from professionals and family if you need more help.
Osteoarthritis is a chronic joint disorder that occurs when cartilage, the tissue that cushions the ends of the bones in a joint, degenerates. This causes the smooth, slippery surface of the cartilage to become rough and pitted, so that the joint can no longer move smoothly. The result is often disabling pain and stiffness, particularly in the joints of the fingers, spine, hips, knees and feet.

How Does Osteoarthritis Differ From Rheumatoid Arthritis?
Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disorder in which the body’s defense system attacks the joints. The thin layer of cells called the synovium that line and lubricate the joints becomes inflamed. Rheumatoid arthritis usually hits people between ages 30 and 50, but can strike at any age, including childhood.

What Are The Risk Factors For Osteoarthritis?
The precise causes of osteoarthritis are not known, but certain factors increase your risk of developing the disease:

- **Age.** After age 40 in women and after age 50 in men, the incidence of osteoarthritis increases dramatically.
- **Gender.** More women than men develop osteoarthritis, particularly in the hand and knee. Men are more prone to affliction in the hip.
- **Obesity.** Excess weight contributes to osteoarthritis of the knee and to some extent the hip.
- **Heredity.** Some forms of this disease, especially in the fingers, appear to run in families.
- **Repetitive Use.** Jobs or recreational activities that require repetitive bending or continuous “wear and tear” of a joint adds to the risk.
- **Severe Trauma.** A fracture or ligament tear can accelerate osteoarthritis.

What Symptoms Might Suggest Osteoarthritis?
Osteoarthritis manifests itself through many symptoms, and you cannot diagnose it on your own. Some warning signs include stiffness when you awake; one or more joints that don’t move normally and may be swollen (pain may last only a couple of hours and come on after physical exercise). As the disease progresses, the pain may persist for longer periods. Check out the side bar to learn more about the strategies for coping with osteoarthritis.

Source: Understanding Healthcare, Richard Saul Wurman

**Coping With Osteoarthritis: 6 Tips**
Osteoarthritis can damage your joints. There are things you can do to keep the damage from getting worse and help make yourself feel better.

1. **Maintain a healthy weight.** Try to keep your weight down. Too much weight can make your knees and hips hurt.
2. **Exercise.** Moving all of your joints may help you reduce the stiffness in your joints. A healthcare provider can show you how to move more easily. Going for a walk every day will help, too.
3. **Take your medicine.** Take your medicines when and how you are supposed to. They can help reduce pain and stiffness.
4. **Warm up with a soothing shower.** Try taking a warm shower in the morning to loosen up your joints.
5. **See your provider.** It is important to make and keep regular checkups so you and your provider can keep your osteoarthritis under control.
6. **Seek information that can help you.** For more information on arthritis and musculoskeletal and skin diseases, contact any of the following organizations:
   b. Arthritis Foundation [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)
   d. American College of Rheumatology [www.rheumatology.org](http://www.rheumatology.org)

Source: Understanding Healthcare, Richard Saul Wurman; National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health. (Understanding Healthcare is available at www.amazon.com—this is a great book!)