



Sleep: the Restorative Practice

By: Lynda Savidge

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Getting a good night's rest is so important for regenerating our minds and bodies. The need for sleep becomes increasingly clear on days after sleeplessness. While critical for overall health and well-being, good quality sleep can become elusive for many of us.

Millions of people regularly experience insomnia in one form or another. Insomnia is typically broken into four categories:

1. Difficulty falling asleep
2. Difficulty staying asleep
3. Early morning (before the roosters) awakening
4. Unrefreshing sleep

Many people experience at least one type of insomnia regularly. All types lead to daytime fatigue and decreased productiveness. There is a strong correlation between accidents, concentration, memory and mood with sleeplessness.

Getting fewer hours of sleep, but still feel great? Then you are most likely experiencing a naturally decreased need for sleep, a common occurrence as we age. However, if you feel fatigued when you wake up or during the day, there are many natural approaches to help you sleep well and improve your overall health.

Chronic insomnia is reversible for most people. And the good news is that many of the natural approaches to insomnia also aid in overall health. Here are some options that only require your time and attention:

1. Stick to a regular sleep schedule as much as possible, even on weekends. However, do not go to bed until you are tired enough to sleep.
2. Only use your bed for sleep and sexual activity. If you lay in bed for more than 30 minutes without sleeping, get out of bed and do something relaxing until you are tired enough to sleep.
3. Exercise daily. A 30 minute walk, especially outdoors, will improve sleep patterns. Our bodies appreciate and respond to exercise in many positive ways, including better sleep.
4. Get outdoors. Our bodies respond to natural shifting light, so the more we expose ourselves to the outdoors, the more our natural rhythms will respond to night-time darkness.
5. Make your bedroom quiet and comfortable. Many people find improvement from removing all electronics from the bedroom. If you don't want to remove them, attach them to a power cord and turn power off before bed.

6. Put your worries away when you go to bed. Some people use journaling, positive interactions or even writing worries down and throwing them away as methods of clearing them out before sleep.
7. Do something relaxing and calming before bed. Take a warm bath, meditate, read a positive book or talk to someone you love. Bed time routines are good reminders that we are preparing our mind and body for sleep.
8. Avoid eating before bed, especially large meals or spicy foods.
9. Avoid the frequent use of sedatives. Medicines can train our bodies that we need something external in order to sleep and alter our healthy sleep patterns.

There are mixed reviews on napping during the day and night time sleep patterns. It is consistently clear that too much sleep during the day interferes with nighttime sleep. “Power napping” (30 minutes or less) has positive effects but sleeping for hours during the day does not.

If you try these lifestyle remedies and still find you have difficulty sleeping at night, there are a number of natural alternatives and most have positive side-benefits. You can try any one or a combination until your sleep is satisfying and you awaken refreshed and ready to face the world with gusto!

1. Melatonin: an MPM favorite is MelatoninCR by Xymogen. Even for those who think melatonin doesn’t work for them this product is a game-changer.
2. 5-HTP: used both for improving sleep and mood balancing (when sleep improves, so does mood!) 5-HTP CR is a favorite because the sustained release formula increases efficacy.
3. Cerenity PM: A new addition to the MPM shop, this intelligent product has synergistic compounds promoting the body’s natural sleep systems.
4. Lavender: the product Lavela is an ingestible form of lavender and is an increasingly popular product. Lavender essential oil has significant historical use for soothing the mind and calming anxiety. “Sandman” is a roll-on essential oil blend with lavender and roman chamomile as an external sleep aid.
5. MyoCalm PM: excellent as a blend for relaxing both you and your muscles, especially appropriate for people with restless leg or night time cramping.
6. Power to Sleep: a classic combination similar to Myocalm PM, this product also incorporates a small dose of melatonin.
7. SleepBlend: this blend is PA Jessica’s favorite and includes the magnesium/calcium and the herbal combination valerian, hops, passionflower as well as both 5-HTP and melatonin.
8. Kava Kava: a classic remedy for stress/anxiety. Kava Kava as a tincture or capsule helps relieve the “racing mind” that prevents sleep. Handy as a primary or back-up to your sleep regimen.

Regardless of what method(s) you choose to ensure healthy sleep, please be sure to get your perfect amount. Keep in mind that we are all fabulously different. If you need more sleep to function well, acknowledge and honor that you do. If you need less sleep, forcing more will not improve your well-being. And since our bodies change over time, our sleep requirements will as well. Stay aware of your personal sleep needs to make your days and nights are the best they can be!

Wishing You Health and Bliss,
Lynda