

Chatting with The Good Dr. Laura Shook  
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A good night's sleep is a wonderful and refreshing experience. However for millions of people restful slumber is elusive and difficult to obtain. Could it be that anxieties, frustrations, responsibilities and worries dance about their minds? Is it caffeine, nicotine or some other (possibly unmentionable) vice coursing through their veins? Maybe it's the lights and sounds of this busy world intruding and overloading the senses. Or perhaps it is a mattress that sags and no longer provides the support it once did. Whatever the reason, the lack of restful sleep, otherwise known as insomnia, is a common complaint for many people.

Here are a few things to remember about getting a good night of sleep.

Get regular exercise and exercise in the morning when ever possible. Exercise within 3 hours of bedtime can interfere with sleep. A lack of exercise leads to, among other things, obesity, heart disease and sleep apnea all of which can interfere with restful sleep.

Limit consumption of caffeinated beverages such as coffee, cola and tea. Avoid consuming any caffeinated beverage late in the day. Make water your beverage of choice after lunch.

Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time even on weekends and holidays. Establishing a routine will help your body know when it its time to rest.

Keep the bedroom at a cool, comfortable temperature and try to make the room dark when you are ready for bed.

Keep a journal. If worrisome events are keeping you awake, write about it, draw pictures about it and get it out of your head and onto paper.

Let me chat for a moment about mattresses. If you wake up each morning with aches and pains that vanish once you are up and moving your mattress might need replacing. When mattress shopping take along your pillow, kick off your shoes and settle down for a nap. Yes, right there in the mattress store. A mattress is a big commitment and can be pricey so make sure it is right for you before committing to the purchase. A mattress should be firm yet with a padded layer to cushion your shoulders and hips. Sometimes this padding is a separate layer of foam, feather or wool that can be removed and laundered. Turn your mattress at least once a month to evenly distribute the wear and tear.

In his book "Restful Sleep" Deepak Chopra, M. D. discusses sleep, dreams and the natural rhythms of the body. He suggests that sleep and dreams are part of a natural rhythm, not unlike the turning of the seasons, the migration of birds or the cycles of the moon. He suggests that the modern world filled with busyness, electric lights and continual sensory stimulation has drawn us away from this natural rhythm. For someone sensitive to these rhythms, this disruption will be reflected into their cycles of, dreams and restorative sleep.

I will leave you with these words from my momma, "Good night, sleep tight and don't let the bed bugs bite"

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