

WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP

- It is most important to have a set schedule. Your bedtime and wake up time should be the same on all days.
- There are many relaxation techniques that promote sleep and work well for people with chronic pain. This can include rhythmic breathing techniques, meditation, guided imagery or visualization, and progressive muscle relaxation. There are many CDs providing guided sleep instructions as well as Yoga Nidra.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages. Many people find it hard to fall asleep if their coffee or caffeinated beverage (including chocolate) is consumed after 3 PM. This may apply to sugar as well.
- Many experts feel that your evening meal, especially if it is a full dinner, should be consumed 3-4 hours before your bedtime.
- Alcohol may help you fall asleep but overall it is more disruptive to sleep. The more you drink, the worse it gets. Alcohol reduces REM sleep, which is the restorative sleep we need to prevent daytime drowsiness and increase concentration. (WebMD)
- Regular exercise will help you sleep better. Endorphins increase with exercise, which promote a more peaceful sleep.
- Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet and try to make it a cozy haven for sleep by avoiding clutter and distractions such as watching television, checking your email, etc.



A behavioral sleep medicine specialist can be consulted to help you implement these strategies on your own or offer you CBT(cognitive behavior therapy) which is very effective for insomnia. (Special Report from Mayo Clinic Health Letter)