

## Changing Your Sleep Habits

### **Allow yourself at least one hour before bedtime to unwind**

Use this time as a transitional period to engage in your pre-bedtime rituals such as reading, washing or brushing your teeth. Do not rehash events of the day, or plan tomorrow's schedule. No problem solving should be done, as it will over stimulate you and interfere with falling asleep.

### **Lie down intending to sleep only when drowsy**

There is no reason for going to bed if you are not sleepy. This gives you more time to worry about your inability to sleep and reinforces the negative association between your bedroom surroundings and wakefulness.

### **If you can't sleep, get out of bed.**

When you find yourself unable to sleep or return to sleep within a period of 10-15 minutes, get out of bed, go into another room and engage in some quiet activity, such as reading. Do not sleep on the couch. Return to bed only when sleepy and repeat this step as often as necessary.

### **Maintain a regular time of getting up**

Set your alarm clock and get out of bed at the same time every day. This should be done consistently, regardless of the time you went to bed, or the amount of sleep obtained on the previous night. This will help your body acquire a consistent sleep rhythm.

### **Reserve your bed and bedroom for sleeping only**

Do not read, eat, watch TV, pay bills, or worry in your bed or bedroom either during the day or night. Sex is the only exception to the rule. By doing this, it will reinforce that the bed/bedroom is a cue to sleep, not for non-sleep activities.

### **Restrict the amount of time you spend in bed**

People with insomnia frequently spend excessive amounts of time in bed to make sure they achieve adequate sleep duration. Excessive amounts of time in bed tend to exacerbate, rather than alleviate, your sleep problem. As your sleep improves, you can gradually increase the amount of time in bed.

### **Limit daytime napping**

Daytime napping should be limited to no more than one hour per day and should be taken well before your regular bedtime to minimize interfering with your sleep.

### **Make an appointment with Dr. Rheuark at (310) 373-8777**