10 Tips for Sleeping Well Despite Anxiety

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Anxiety and Sleep: How to Deal With Sleep Issues

Sleep is absolutely vital for a healthy lifestyle. While we sleep our brain is working to prepare itself for the following day; it is getting ready to absorb, learn, and retain new information.

Sleep deprivation causes a whole host of problems, making it more difficult to cope with and solve problems, control our emotions, or deal with changes in our life. This can hinder our ability to function physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Having anxiety can make getting enough sleep rather difficult. At the same time, not getting enough sleep makes anxiety even worse. These two issues seem to play off of each other.

Regardless of what starts first, it is a vicious cycle.

I’m sure most people have experienced that frustration of laying down in bed, closing their eyes, then and suddenly having their mind filled with some problem from that day, or a list of all that needs to be done the next day.

This experience is even more common for people with anxiety; except for us it can be considerably more trying. We may be plagued with flashbacks of unpleasant memories, or distressing thoughts of what the future holds.

These thoughts are clearly not conducive to a good night's sleep. So, what can be done?

Limit Caffeine

No, you don’t necessarily have to give up your morning coffee, just be careful with how much you drink, perhaps limiting yourself to one cup. It is also wise to have a cut-off point for caffeine each day, especially since caffeine and anxiety may not be a good combination.

Stick to a Schedule

Have a set time to go to bed. Have a set time to wake up. Yes, this will be difficult at first, but it does help and it will get easier over time.

Keep a Notepad Next to Your Bed

Did you suddenly remember five more things that need to be put on your to-do list? Write them down and forget about them.

Did you remember something from the past and have a flood of emotions come over you? Get it all out and onto

paper.

Are you filled with dread about some future event or about the possibility of something happening? Write it down. It is amazing how much relief can be felt once you get a thought out of your head and on paper.

Create a Calm, Soothing Environment

If at all possible your bedroom should be just that, a bedroom. Not your office, not your exercise room — it should be a calm and comfortable space for you.

Ideally your room should be cool, dark, and quiet.

Have a Bedtime Ritual

Your bedtime ritual should involve whatever you consider calming: a warm bath or shower, reading, writing, gentle stretches, listening to music — whatever it is you find relaxing.

Exercise

Regular physical activity helps to promote better sleep habits, in addition to helping reduce the effects of anxiety. Just be careful not to do any strenuous exercise too close to bedtime — you may find yourself too energized to fall asleep.

Dim the Lights

About an hour or more before bedtime, start dimming the lights around the house, perhaps switching from overhead lights to lamps. This will signal your brain that is almost time to sleep and help to promote a relaxed atmosphere.

Check Your Medications and Supplements

Do you take any medicines or natural supplements? Have you checked if you are taking them at the right time?

Some may cause you to feel more alert, while others have a sedative effect. Check the labels, talk to your doctor, or research them to make sure you take them at the right time.

Aromatherapy

Certain aromas promote relaxation and can help you to sleep better. Using essential oils, such as lavender or chamomile, in a diffuser or topically may benefit you.

Don’t Watch The Clock

It is not uncommon for someone that is having trouble falling asleep to frequently check the time, thinking, “If I fall asleep now I can get six hours of sleep.”

But this will not help you get to sleep any faster. So try not to worry about the time, or how much sleep you will, or won’t, be getting. Instead focus on calming thoughts that will be likely to send you off into dreamland.

Getting enough sleep can be a real challenge when you have anxiety. But a few adjustments to your schedule and habits can make a big difference in your ability to fall, and then stay, asleep.
Have you found anything that helps you to get a better night sleep? We would love to hear about it, please share your tips with us in the comments below.