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Tips to Better Sleep

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Studies have shown cognitive and behavioral therapy has a much better track record of success than drug therapy since it treats the underlying causes. Some cognitive and behavioral tips to improving sleep hygiene include:

- > **Stick to a specific schedule** of when you go to sleep and wake up, even on holidays and weekends.
- > **Only use the bed for sleep and sex**, not to watch television, read or snack.
- > **If you're not able to sleep** after 20 minutes, do something relaxing until you are sleepy again to avoid anxiety and "clock-watching" behavior.
- > **To make the bedroom a restful place**, remove the television, dim the lights and turn off any background noise.
- > **Avoid caffeine** in the afternoon.
- > **Avoid alcohol**. While it may make you initially sleepy, it will disrupt sleep.
- > **While physical exercise** often helps sleep, do not exercise within two hours of bedtime.
- > **If you're unable to sleep at night**, do not take naps during the day; this perpetuates an irregular circadian rhythm cycle.
- > **Quit smoking**. Smokers will wake after only a few hours of sleep because of symptoms of nicotine withdrawal.
- > **Keep a sleep log** to discover what is triggering your insomnia to help your doctor plan the best therapy for you.
- > **Keep a "worry book"** to write down anxieties or worries that may be keeping you up at night and vow to do something about them the next day.