

INSOMNIA

By Kim Manning, C.M.Ht.

Insomnia has become an epidemic in our rapidly changing, stress-filled world. It can be defined formally as a perceived disturbance of the usual sleep pattern, with one or more of these characteristics: (1) inability to fall asleep, (2) inability to maintain sleep, and (3) early awakening.

One half of all adult Americans now say they have trouble sleeping, fifty percent more than eight years ago. About 60 million Americans each year suffer from insomnia, which can lead to serious sleep deficits and problems. Insomnia tends to increase with age and affects about 40 percent of women and 30 percent of men.

Poor sleep impairs the ability to react creatively and appropriately to situations. It leaves the sufferer tired, anxious, and emotionally unstable. Sleep disturbances can also do serious physical damage.

Worry, depression, or simply noise can interfere with proper sleep. Excessive worry doesn't allow the sufferer to enjoy the relaxation needed to go to sleep. Depressed people will often 'overdream,' leaving them exhausted the next day. To prevent this overdreaming, the body will sometimes wake the sufferer before too much dreaming has taken place – the so-called 'early-morning-waking' syndrome – leaving the victim without enough sleep.

After insomnia has disturbed sleep for some days or weeks, sleep anxiety, where the victim worries all day about the next night's sleep, can make a peaceful night even less likely.

Insomnia has many causes. If you are having difficulty falling asleep, awaken several times throughout the night, have early morning awakenings, or have marked difficulty getting out of bed in the mornings, start by consulting with your health care provider.

Though some cases of insomnia are caused by a medical problem, many can be alleviated with behavioral changes, relaxation, and/or hypnotherapy. It is useful to talk about three types of insomnia: **transient**, **intermittent**, and **chronic**. Insomnia lasting for a few days or weeks is referred to as transient. If episodes of transient insomnia occur from time to time, the insomnia is said to be intermittent. Chronic insomnia occurs on most nights and lasts a month or more.

Transient and **intermittent** insomnia are usually caused by temporary conditions like stress, anxiety, extreme temperatures, a change in the environment, jet lag, a different work schedule, or a new medication. The causes of **chronic** insomnia are more complex. A combination of factors may be at work, including underlying physical or mental disorders. Depression is one of the most common causes of chronic insomnia. Other underlying causes include arthritis, sleep apnea, narcolepsy, restless-leg syndrome, and hypertension. Past traumas or fears will often be hidden causes of chronic insomnia. Behavioral factors, such as the misuse of caffeine, alcohol or other substances; the wake/sleep cycles upset by a change in work or personal schedules; or emotional stress can also produce chronic insomnia.

Relaxation Therapy for Transient and Intermittent Insomnia

There are specific and effective techniques that can reduce or eliminate anxiety and body tension. As a result, the person's mind is able to stop "racing," the muscles can relax, and restful sleep can occur. Self-hypnosis helps the sufferer to disconnect from an overactive intellect while resting. A qualified hypnotherapist can teach self-hypnosis in one session.

Hypnotherapy For Chronic Insomnia

Hypnotherapy can uncover and address the core issues that underlie the insomnia. A qualified hypnotherapist can help reduce significantly or eliminate completely most forms of insomnia. Hypnotherapy addresses the subconscious mind where all memory lies. It is the subconscious part of the mind that controls and determines the behavior of insomnia. It is also through the subconscious mind that new behaviors can replace old habits, allowing positive and beneficial changes to occur.

References by Gregg D. Jacobs, Ph.D. Author of "Say Good Night To Insomnia"
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www.talkaboutsleeeep.com

www.FocusedSolutions.com