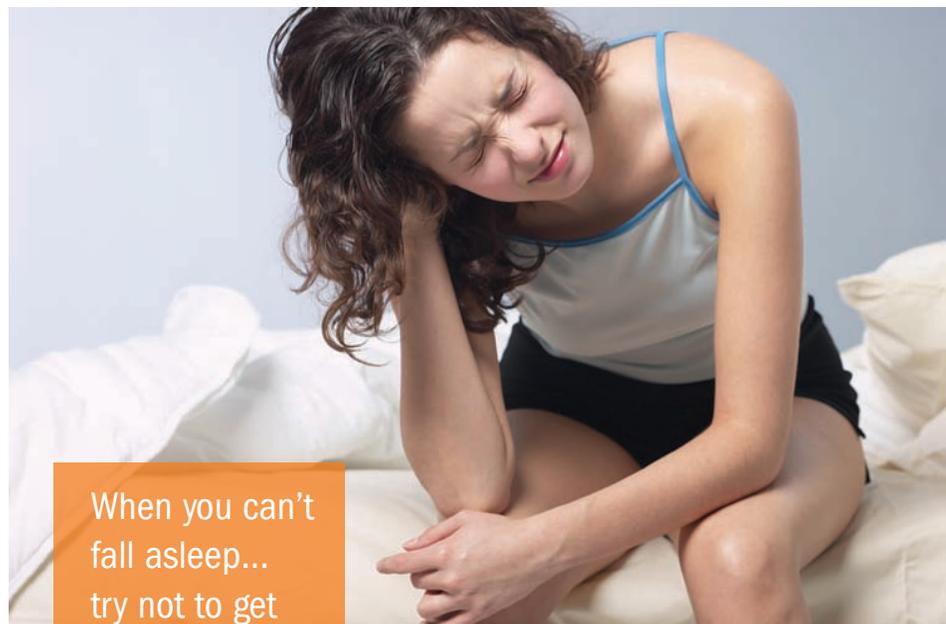


Tips for When You Can't Fall Asleep

There are days when you just can't fall asleep for whatever physical, mental, or emotional reason. If it is a recurring problem then talk to your doctor. When it happens, even once in awhile, it can be frustrating and this frustration leads to more stimulation and less ability to sleep! The following tips will help you when you can't fall asleep, or stay asleep, and for how to avoid triggers that will keep you from falling asleep.

When you can't fall asleep:

- Try not to get frustrated! Losing one night of sleep is not that big of a deal. If it is happening you want to remain as calm as possible so as to not exacerbate the situation. Remember: Even if you aren't sleeping, your body is still getting some rest. So let it rest even if you are awake.
- Getting ready for sleep is often when our mind begins to race. This tends to cause more stress, more stimulation, and less likelihood of getting to sleep! Try to relax with deep breathing.
- Use the time to practice mental-focus techniques that will help you in your day.
- Keep a pen and paper nearby. If your mind stays active you'll start to remember things you forgot or need to do. Write them down and tell yourself that you'll deal with them tomorrow.
- If you find your mind particularly active and all else has failed, start reading a light book that will help you sleep. Avoid anything that requires a lot of thought or will stimulate you further.



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Avoiding Triggers:

- Reduce stimulation. When we become aroused our senses are heightened. Use ear plugs, keep the temperature moderate, avoid using overnight slow cookers or timed coffee makers that will invoke your sense of smell.
- Keep your room as dark as possible. Light signals the brain to wake up and will affect our sleep cycle.
- Avoid heavy reading before going to bed.
- Avoid eating before going to bed because your body will be actively working to digest your food and not to rejuvenate itself.
- Avoid physical exercise before going to bed. Your body will stay energized long after and it will be difficult to settle enough to sleep!
- Go to bed when you're tired.
- Avoid caffeine past 2pm. Caffeine is a stimulant and stays in your system for several hours!

Try to keep to a sleep schedule as best as you can. Bodies work well with a routine and structure. Aim to fall sleep around 10pm. According to some ancient philosophies, your body detoxifies itself at a higher rate between 10pm and midnight. Give your body the rest and relaxation it wants and needs!
