Nonpharmacological Therapies for Insomnia

**Keep a sleep diary and keep realistic sleep goals:**
✓ How long did you sleep last night? (average 6-7 hours)
✓ How long did it take for you to fall asleep? (average 20 mins)
✓ How many times did you wake up? How long did you stay awake?
✓ Estimate the time, and **don't look at the clock** at night (causes more anxiety)
✓ Find an **app** on your **smartphone** to help you keep track of your sleep

**“Applied Relaxation”**

- **Paced Breathing**
  ✓ Put your hand on your chest and abdomen
  ✓ *Inhale* and *exhale* slowly allowing your chest and abdomen to rise up and down

- **Deep muscle relaxation**
  ✓ *Tense* each muscle group for 5 seconds and then *relax* them for 10 seconds
  ✓ Say the word “relax” slowly to yourself
  ✓ Move your body progressively

- **Imagery-induced relaxation**
  ✓ Close your eyes and imagine a **relaxing scene** (beach, lake, backyard)
  ✓ Relax, thinking of the **sights, smells, and sounds** of your image

- **Self-hypnosis**
  ✓ We have conscious and unconscious parts of our mind
  ✓ We can reach a state of heightened relaxation or **trance state**
  ✓ Please visit www.wchn.cobaltcbt.com or search “self-hypnosis” on the internet to find mp3s with instructions for self-hypnosis

**Practice good sleep habits**

- **Stimulus control**
  ✓ Associate your bedroom with **sleep**
    * Avoid watching TV, using electronic devices, or reading **IN BED**
    * Do these activities **outside** of the bedroom (make the bed for **sleep** and sex only)
  ✓ If you don’t fall asleep within **20-30 mins**, **get out of bed** and **come back** when you’re sleepy

- **Sleep hygiene**
  ✓ Avoid **caffeine** (coffee, teas, soft drinks, chocolate)
  ✓ Avoid **smoking** in the evening (nicotine/nicotine withdrawal contributes to insomnia)
  ✓ Try sleeping in **separate beds** if you have a noisy bed partner or pet
  ✓ Avoid **exercise** 4 hours before bed time
  ✓ Avoid **alcohol** before bed
  ✓ Avoid **naps** after 3:00PM; keep naps < 15 mins.
  ✓ Avoid high fatty, sugary, salty **foods** before bed
  ✓ Avoid drinking too much **liquids** before bed (nocturia)
  ✓ Maintain a comfortable **room temperature** in a **dark** room
DON’T LOOK AT THE CLOCK! (causes more anxiety)
Talk to your doctor about some of your medications that may interfere with your sleep

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
✓ Change our thinking patterns to avoid thoughts that disrupt sleep: anxiety, frustration, depression

1. Identify unhelpful thoughts about sleep
2. Examine and challenge the validity of these thoughts
3. Replace the unhelpful thoughts with helpful thoughts

“So What If…” Technique
- Defuse automatic thoughts of “worst-case scenarios”
- Sometimes we can only control our reaction to a problem
- Don’t spend too much time thinking about the problem

Example:
Automatic Thought: “If I don’t sleep tonight I’m going to be too tired to work effectively tomorrow”
So what if I’m too tired to work effectively tomorrow? “My boss will be disappointed or frustrated with me”

So what if my boss becomes disappointed or frustrated with me? “I will get fired or get in trouble for a reason beyond my control”

So what can I do to avoid getting in trouble for a reason beyond my control? “I can remind myself this is not my fault and explain to my boss my sleep problem so he/she can understand my situation better”

Keep your sleep expectations realistic and don’t get distraught or think the worst because of a poor night’s sleep
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**Mindfulness**
✓ Insomnia can be caused by **stress**
✓ People often use mindfulness to focus on the **“here and now”** to avoid judgment of what is happening and **change our harmful perceptions**

1. **Observe the experience**
   - **Notice** what’s happening and what your senses are sensing

2. **Describe the experience**
   - **Put words to** what you are sensing

3. **Participate in the experience**
   - Let yourself go, **accept yourself** and the situation as they are, and **change harmful reactions** to the experience

**Example:**
1. **Observe:**
   
   Tense head, tense and tired body, eyes that won’t close, feelings of frustration, anger, and defeat, dark room, sound of the clock, restless legs

2. **Describe:**
   
   I’ve had trouble sleeping lately and I’m frustrated and angry that this is happening to me because it affects my work during the day. I feel like I want to scream because my body will not listen to me.

3. **Participate:**
   
   It is not my fault that I can’t sleep. Many people suffer from insomnia and I am one of those people. Being frustrated and angry will only increase my stress and will not help me relax and fall sleep. Screaming will worsen my stress and will probably wake up my neighbors. It’s okay if I do not get enough sleep tonight. I will stick to what I learned in CBT and simply try again the next night.

Please refer to the Cobalt CBT website for more information!

[www.wchn.cobaltcbt.com](http://www.wchn.cobaltcbt.com)

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