

Towards A Good Night's Sleep

Over 30 Helpful and Effective Solutions (Sleep Aids) by a
Knowledgeable Holistic MD

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Introduction

"To sleep, perchance to dream..." William Shakespeare: Hamlet Act III, scene I.

Sleep deprivation can seriously shorten your life.

One in 3 of us suffers from poor sleep, with stress, computers and taking work home often blamed. However, the cost of all those sleepless nights is more than just bad moods and a lack of focus.

Did you know that sleep deprivation can also have profound consequences on your physical health?

Continuing poor sleep puts you at risk of serious medical conditions, including obesity, heart disease and diabetes – and it shortens your life expectancy. It's now clear that a solid night's sleep is essential for a long and healthy life. [NHS website, UK]

In the famous "Whitehall II Study," into the lives and health of civil servants, British researchers discovered less than five hours of sleep *doubled the risk of death from cardiovascular disease*, which is the number one cause of death in the world.

Thing is that sleep deprivation leads to serious inflammation throughout the body and inflammation is the number one ager, whether as depression, Alzheimer's disease, obesity, diabetes or even cancer.

So, insomnia is a serious health topic. Your first sleep aid could thus be: **1. turmeric**, well known for its anti-inflammatory properties.

This white paper is to help you get started on holistic sleep remedies, meaning sleep aids that do NOT include sleep medications such as Ambien and Lunesta. OTC sleep remedies, while less dangerous, are generally anti-histamines and have very limited benefits.

First of All, Prepare For Sleep

Most people omit a "wind down" step before they go to bed. This is a serious mistake.

You need to slow down or stop mental stimulation at least one hour before retiring. That means no TV, no texting, no WhatsApp calls, no online games, no sugary drinks, no alcohol, and of course NO CAFFEINE!

Turn your cell phone OFF completely. Do not leave it on in your bedroom. Not only will you be “tempted” but cell phones are known for broadcasting biologically disturbing frequencies and that’s the last thing you need if you have a sleep problem. In fact don’t even take a phone into your sleep space!

Part of this preparation process is to take control of your physical environment. We want SILENCE. If that's not achievable, you must use earplugs to dampen the ambient noise (**sleep aid #2**).

Light is stressful, especially blue light. Blue light damages your eyes and that is now a recognized hazard of using computers: computer monitors emit bluish light, unless accompanied by a software app, such as f.lux, which turns your screen to yellow at a set point in the evening (and back to white next morning).

For optimum sleep we need the bedroom as dark as possible. Don't worry about fancy fabrics, drapes and screens: we want a black out, if possible. Who cares how it looks?

If you can't achieve reasonable darkness, get a sleep mask (**sleep aid #3**) They are quite comfortable and you'll soon get used to wearing one.



Mask image courtesy of Walmart, who supply them

How To Catch Up On Lost Sleep

Lack of sufficient sleep is called sleep deprivation. It's cumulative and individuals who sleep poorly can be carrying around a significant backlog of missed sleep that goes back weeks, or even months. IT IS HIGHLY BENEFICIAL TO START CATCHING UP ON YOUR SLEEP DEFICIT.

It won't happen with a single early night. If you've had months of restricted sleep, you'll have built up a major sleep debt and recovery can be expected to take several weeks.

Starting on a weekend, try to add on an extra hour or 2 of sleep a night (**sleep aid #4**). Expect to sleep for upwards of 10 hours a night at first. After a while, the amount of time you sleep will gradually decrease to a normal level.

Here are 7 benefits from sleeping soundly and sufficiently can boost your health, from the UK NHS website:

- **Boosting Immunity**

In times of COVID, this can be specially important! If you seem to catch every cold and flu that's going around, a lack of sleep could be to blame. Prolonged lack of sleep can disrupt your immune system, so you're less able to fend off bugs.

- **Slimming**

Sleeping less may mean you put on weight! Studies have shown that people who sleep less than 7 hours a day tend to gain more weight and have a higher risk of becoming obese than those who get 7 hours of slumber.

It's believed to be because sleep-deprived people have reduced levels of leptin (the chemical that makes you feel full) and increased levels of ghrelin (the hunger-stimulating hormone).

- **Boosting Mental Wellbeing**

Given that a single sleepless night can make you irritable and moody the following day, it's not surprising that chronic sleep debt may lead to long-term mood disorders like depression and anxiety.

When people with anxiety or depression were surveyed to calculate their sleeping habits, it turned out that most of them slept for less than 6 hours a night.

- **Sleep Prevents Diabetes**

Studies have suggested that people who usually sleep less than 5 hours a night have an increased risk of developing diabetes.

It seems that missing out on deep sleep may lead to type 2 diabetes by changing the way the body processes glucose, which the body uses for energy.

- **Sleep Increases Sex Drive**

Yes to this one! Men and women who don't get enough quality sleep have lower libidos and less of an interest in sex, research suggests.

Men who suffer from sleep apnea – a disorder in which breathing difficulties lead to interrupted sleep – also tend to have lower testosterone levels, which can in turn lower libido.

- **Sleep Wards Off Heart Disease**

Long-standing sleep deprivation seems to be associated with increased heart rate, an increase in blood pressure and higher levels of certain chemicals linked with inflammation, which may put extra strain on your heart.

- **Sleep Increases Fertility**

A pleasant shock and great news with couples struggling with infertility!

Difficulty conceiving a baby has been claimed as one of the effects of sleep deprivation, in both men and women. Apparently, regular sleep disruptions can cause trouble conceiving by reducing the secretion of reproductive hormones.



A surprise benefit of getting more sleep... A baby!

Chemical (Substance) Sleep Remedies

Sleep remedies are things you do, or take, to help put you to sleep and (preferably) keep you asleep for many hours—not the same thing, note. Sleep remedies can be herbal, vitamin and supplements or an electronic aid.

A good place to start is with amino acid L-Theanine (**sleep aid #5**). It's present in black tea, from the Camelia bush, which may explain why tea has such a calming effect on the whole. But it's better to buy L-Theanine from the health foods store: the dose is guaranteed and can be controlled. Take 100 mg at first, if that's not enough, try 200 mg. If that doesn't work, try something else.

Important note: L-Theanine will knock you out but does not hold you in sleep. Hence a quiet and darkened ambience is important. You don't want waking up again after just 2 – 3 hours sleep!

Try Chamomile tea (**sleep aid #6**). Chamomile (*Matricaria camomilla*) is a common flowering plant that is indigenous to various parts of central and southern Europe. The dried leaves and flowers are commonly packaged as a tea and can be purchased over the counter in both bagged and loose form.

Unlike some herbal sleep remedies, chamomile does not have to be used on a regular basis to be effective as a treatment for insomnia. It can be used on the spot to provide quick relief for sleeplessness and anxiety.

Chrysin, a flavonoid component of Chamomile, is the chemical attributed to Chamomile's ability to relieve anxiety and promote sleep. Chrysin can also be found in Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnatus*), another plant that has been found to be effective in the treatment of insomnia and anxiety (**sleep aid #7**)

Chamomile tea is most effective when sipped a half an hour to forty-five minutes before going to bed. It has been found that chamomile can be especially helpful in relieving the symptoms of mild insomnia (a.k.a. transient insomnia).

Melatonin (sleep remedy #8).

Everyone knows melatonin. It is secreted by the pineal gland and is a powerful anti-oxidant, as well as a sleep hormone.

Melatonin levels rise dramatically in the evening, and the hormone works to relax your body and mind, preparing you to fall asleep. Taking it as a supplement can leave you groggy, so don't take too much; 3 mg is about right for an adult. If you find yourself waking too soon, try the sustained-release form (SR). It delivers melatonin slowly over several hours to maintain blood levels for a longer period of time.

Better is to take a self-concocted sleep formula, as follows (**sleep aid #9**):

- 3 mgs melatonin
- 5,000 IU of vitamin D
- 50 – 100 mg of 5-hydroxytryptophan (5HT)

This suggestion comes from my good friend Graham Simpson MD and he swears by it.

Valerian Root Extract (sleep aid #10)

To gain the most benefit from valerian root it is necessary to use it on a regular basis, with the full effects coming to fruition slowly and steadily over time.

It should be used for about one month to produce results. Regular use of valerian root promotes deep relaxation and sleep. Studies suggest that valerian is by far the best herbal solution for insomnia and general sleeplessness for most individuals.

Research by P.D. Leatherwood, Ph.D., and F. Chauffard, Ph.D., at Nestlé Research Laboratories in Switzerland, determined that a 450 mg dose of valerian in an aqueous extract is the optimum dose as an insomnia treatment; a higher dose typically results in grogginess without increasing effectiveness, and therefore care should be taken when administering valerian as a treatment for insomnia.

Furthermore, in 1982 Leatherwood and colleagues performed a double-blind crossover study of 128 subjects, which found valerian root to not only be effective as a sedative for insomnia, but also effective in improving the overall *quality* of sleep in test subjects.

It has been suggested that the name of the drug Valium (generic name diazepam) was inspired by valerian. Certainly the effects of valerian on the body are similar to that of benzodiazepine, an active ingredient in Valium. But valerian does not produce the same degree of next-day lethargy or dullness.

Unlike other commonly prescribed sleep medication, it is entirely nontoxic, does not impair the ability to drive or operate heavy machinery, nor does it exaggerate the effects of alcohol.

Lemon Balm (sleep aid #11)

Lemon balm is a herbal tea with a good reputation for inducing calm and relaxation. Try it combined with valerian!

In one interesting study, a combination of lemon balm and valerian was tried on women with menopausal symptoms, including sleep disturbance.

100 women aged 50–60 years who complained of sleep disorders were studied. The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) was administered pre and post-intervention.

A significant difference was observed with reduced levels of sleep disorders amongst the 50 experimental group when compared to the 50 in the placebo group.

[Taavoni S, Nazem ekbatani N, Haghani H. [Valerian/lemon balm use for sleep disorders during menopause](#). *Complement Ther Clin Pract*. 2013;19(4):193-6]

GABA (sleep aid #12)

You could also consider 500 – 1,000 mg of GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid), a nerve relaxant. It has been dubbed the Valium of the natural world but don't be fooled by such marketing hoaxes. However, it is true, GABA does bring relaxation and induces sleep.

A 2018 study published in the journal *Molecules* suggests that breathing in the scent of jasmine (a substance frequently used in aromatherapy) may help enhance the effects of GABA. It could be something to try this oil over a candle in your bedroom (**sleep aid #13**) [Wang ZJ, Heinbockel T. [Essential oils and their constituents targeting the GABAergic system and sodium channels as treatment of neurological diseases](#). *Molecules*. 2018;23(5):1061. doi:10.3390/molecules23051061]

Vitex Agnus Castus (sleep aid #14)

The herb Vitex agnus castus (chaste tree) may help insomnia and sleep disturbances associated with menstrual periods and menopause. In one study, women were treated with a combination of vitex agnus castus and magnolia extracts combined with soy isoflavones and lactobacilli. This treatment was found to be safe and effective over a one-year period. [De Franciscis P, Grauso F, Luisi A, Schettino MT, Torella M, Colacurci N. [Adding agnus castus and magnolia to soy isoflavones relieves sleep disturbances besides postmenopausal vasomotor symptoms--long term safety and effectiveness](#). *Nutrients*. 2017;9(2). doi:10.3390/nu9020129]

However, chaste-berry should not be used by anyone on birth control pills, hormone replacement therapy, or dopamine-related medications, according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. [National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. [Chasteberry](#). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Updated September 2016. nccih.nih.gov]

Homeopathic Remedies (sleep aids #15 - #28)

Surprisingly, even holistic practitioners remain hostile to homeopathy, on the grounds, "It can't possibly work, therefore it is useless or a fraud."

Be assured it is highly effective and valuable, subject to choosing the right remedy for the right person (this is not like orthodox pharmacy, where everyone is affected similarly). For example, a woman who could not sleep because she was recently bereaved would not qualify for the same remedy as a woman who could not sleep because of fear, anxiety and panic attacks.

The huge benefit of homeopathy is its extremely high safety margin since, as critics love to point out, some "potencies" (dilutions) are so great that no possible chemical substance can be present. But that's not to say that the active principle is not still present. It is—and that's the whole point! It's just not "stuff" (active molecules).

The key principle of homeopathy is that "Like cures like". So a remedy that causes sore throat would be used to treat a sore throat (object to critical dilutions). Caffeine, which causes restlessness and jitters instead of sleep, could be used to cure wakefulness; again, subject to critical dilutions.

ALL VERY CONTROVERSIAL. But remember, homeopathy is over 2 centuries old in proving itself. Current drug pharmacy practice barely 50 years and has NOT proven itself very effective.

Astonishingly, the KaiserPermanente website lists a whole range of homeopathic sleep remedies!
(<https://wa.kaiserpermanente.org/kbase/topic.jhtml?docId=hn-2258008>)

These are just a few of my choices...

15. Coffea cruda

Made from unroasted coffee beans, the homeopathic remedy *coffea cruda* claims to have the exact opposite effect as a cup of joe: it unwinds the mind instead of revving it up, and is most often used to combat sleeplessness and racing thoughts in children and adults with ADHD.

16. Avena Sativa provides relief from fatigue and exhaustion and helps in restoring energy levels. it corrects sleeping disorders and promotes better sleep.

17. Nux vomica

This remedy relieves irritability, sleeplessness at 3 a.m., and digestive troubles associated with overindulgence in food, tobacco or alcohol.

18. Silicea (also called Silica)

This is a useful remedy for nervous people with low stamina who get too tired, then have insomnia. The person often goes to sleep at first, but awakens suddenly with a hot or surging feeling in the head—and finds it hard to fall asleep again. People who need this remedy usually have anxious dreams, and some (especially children) sleepwalk frequently.

19. Sulphur

This remedy may be helpful if insomnia comes from itching—or an increasing feeling of heat in bed, especially in the feet. The person is irritable and anxious, and often feels hot and wants to throw the covers off. Lying awake between two and five a.m. is typical. Insomnia that develops because of a lack of exercise may also be helped with *Sulphur*.

20. Aconitum napellus (monk's hood or wolfsbane)

This remedy, from the buttercup family, can be helpful if a person panics with insomnia. Fear and agitation come on suddenly when the person is drifting off to sleep, or may even wake a sleeping person up.

21. Arnica montana

This remedy relieves pain and restless sleep from muscle overexertion.

22. Rhus Tox is also good for tired, aching muscles and is useful for sleeplessness due to overdoing things.

23. Arsenicum album

People who need this remedy are often anxious and compulsive about small details, and have trouble sleeping if they feel that everything is not in place. They are often deeply weary and exhausted, yet feel restless physically and mentally. Sleep, when it arrives, can be anxious and disturbed, with dreams full of fear and insecurity.

24. Calcarea phosphorica

This remedy is often helpful to children with growing pains, and also to adults who have aching in the joints and bones, or neck and shoulder tension that make it hard to fall asleep. The person who needs this remedy lies awake for many hours, feeling upset and irritable—then has trouble waking in the morning, feeling deeply tired and weak.

25. *Cocculus*

This remedy is often helpful to those who feel "too tired to sleep" after long-term sleep loss—from getting up with an infant, taking care of someone who is ill, a disruptive work schedule, travel and jet lag, or chronic worry and insomnia. The person may feel weak and dizzy, with trouble thinking, and may be sleepy, irritable, or tearful.

26. *Ignatia*

If insomnia is caused by emotional upset (grief or loss, a disappointment in love, a shock, or even an argument) this remedy may be helpful. The person is sensitive and nervous, and may often sigh and yawn in the daytime, but find it hard to relax at night. As the person tries to fall asleep, the arms and legs may twitch or itch. If sleep arrives, it is usually light, with jerking of the legs and arms, or long and troubling nightmares.

27. *Lycopodium*

People who need this remedy often have no memory of dreams and often doubt that they have slept at all. Insomnia may set in primarily because of worry: lack of confidence can make them doubt their own abilities, although they are usually very capable. Ravenous hunger in the night that wakes a person up is another indication for *Lycopodium*. But don't forget middle of the night is a classic time for low blood sugar too.

28. *Zincum metallicum*

People who need this remedy often have insomnia from mental activity. They can get wound up from overwork—or be naturally inclined toward nervousness and just have trouble relaxing. Their legs and arms often feel extremely restless, and lying still in bed may be impossible. Even during the daytime, a person who needs this remedy may feel a constant need to move the muscles.

Physical Sleep Aid Devices

Electronic Aids

Alpha brain entrainment devices are available in the market and online. This is now usually grouped all together as "wearable meditation technology": for example the Muse, Flowtime and Alpha Stim.

But I'd like to share with you, in some detail, what I consider the best of all electronic devices for inducing calm, deep and lasting sleep. It's called the BrainTap.

This is brain entrainment at its best. It has four modalities which will put you to sleep, restfully and composed, by reducing your brainwave frequency. There are binaural beats, flickering lights (so-called photic driving), relaxing peaceful music, and my voice, droning on gently, taking you on inspiring "creative mind walks"—all together on the same restful track!

Some people can't even get to the end of the tracks, because they are already asleep.

Here are some notes to help you understand what's different. I call it:

Electronic Zen (sleep aid #29)

Everyone knows that meditation is soothing and calming, you relax, your blood pressure comes down and you live longer (well, almost everyone knows).

I used to do it when I was at med school. I had a big passion for all things Japanese, especially Zen Buddhism. I wrote a special form of poetry called *Haiku* and I won a round-the-world trip for one I wrote in 1967. I worked it out as several hundred dollars per syllable prize money!

The trouble is, it takes years to get good at meditation. Some say 30 years.

How about if we could get all the health benefits of meditation in less than 10 minutes? Sounds good?

This is where Western energy medicine comes into its own. I've been promoting the idea that our Western version of energy medicine won't be some wishy washy make over of Chinese or Indian models (which are just as riddled with dogma as Western science).

In the West we have something better to offer: electronic and technical brilliance. We are already w-a-y past anything the Chinese could do with acupuncture. That's old-fashioned, crude and rather unkind, actually, shoving needles into people. Ugh!

It's much smarter to project red laser light into the acupuncture points and you can even have the light carry the electronic "signature" of remedies. I covered all this in my earth-shaking book *Medicine Beyond* [www.MedicineBeyond.com].

Electronic Meditation

Let's get back to electronic gadgets and their ability to modulate biological parameters and so influence health.

You will have heard of binaural beats and their ability to entrain brain frequencies. Done well, it can take a person from highly buzzed "beta waves", to soothing, calm, relaxed *alpha* or even *theta* brain states.

Binaural beat technology has been around since the 1970s. The first big step came with a ground-breaking paper entitled "Auditory Beats in the Brain" by Dr. Gerald Oster of Mt. Sinai Medical Center, published in the October 1973 issue of *Scientific American*.¹

Oster introduced the term binaural beats, which occurred in the brain when sounds of different frequencies were presented separately to each ear.

A "beat" is the difference between those two frequencies. Thus if one ear gets 440 cycles per second and the other ear get 444 cycles per second, the resulting beat (the difference between the two) is 4 beats per second.

What happens is that the entire brain then resonates at 4 cycles per second. That just happens to be theta brainwave frequency (4- 7 cycles per second) and is characteristic of deeply relaxed, trance-like states.

Good, huh?

Photic Driving

But it gets better; far better. These days we can add flickering lights, which seem to drive the brain even more powerfully than just binaural beats, particularly in the alpha and theta frequencies. This effect was discovered in the 1940s by researcher Gray Walter.

Add slow Baroque music, which has scientifically-proven health enhancements and we get a terrific healing, relaxing technology.

All that needs adding is my sweet, gentle voice (ahem!), guiding you on sensual and exciting mental imagery explorations, such as visiting the Isle of Avalon, Atlantis, galaxies and deep space, talking to our Sun, and we have a stunning combination that makes relaxing mental states, including sleep, not just easy but irresistible! You practically can't fight it! You'll be down in a deep theta before you know it.

What Can It Do For YOU?

Almost anything you want!

Over and over this new technology has been scientifically demonstrated to change physiology and our mental landscape. You can use it in a number of helpful directions:

- Weight loss
- Stress busting
- Giving up addictions
- Improved sexual prowess
- More reactivity
- Better behavior patterns
- Improved moods
- Lowering blood pressure
- Learning a language
- Busting out of study failures.
- Kids subjected to this technology can shed ADD and ADHD.
- Pain relief without drugs
- Coping with cancer and other stressful diseases
- And... of course, improved sleep!

Sleep Induction

Dr. Arthur Hastings, PhD., in a paper entitled "Tests of the Sleep Induction Technique" described the effects of subjects listening to a cassette tape specially engineered to slow the brain wave patterns from a normal waking "beta" brain wave pattern to a slower alpha pattern, then to a still slower theta pattern (the brain wave pattern of dreaming sleep), and finally to a delta pattern, the slowest of all, the brain-wave pattern of dreamless sleep.

Hastings says: We were able to test the effects of the sleep tape on brain waves with an EEG machine through the courtesy of the researchers at the Langely-Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute, part of the University of California Medical School in San Francisco. Dr Joe Kaniya, Director of the Psychophysiology of Consciousness Laboratory, monitored the brain-wave frequencies of one subject as he listened to the sleep tape.

The chart recording showed a typical sleep onset pattern: initial alpha waves, then a slowing of the brain waves with sleep spindles, and finally a pattern of stage 2 and 3 sleep brain waves in the low theta range...the patterns in the various stages demonstrated that the tape was influencing the subject's state.²

Of course these days audio is much simpler, using MP3 files, instead of cassette tapes, which are easily damaged.

But it's not only lowering brainwave frequency that binaural beats may offer to sleep and relaxation. A small study (19 people) has found that exposure to binaural beats is associated with changes to three hormones important to sleep and well-being:

- **DHEA.** DHEA functions as a kind of master hormone, helping to produce other hormones in the body on an as-needed basis. DHEA is critical to immune function and disease protection. Particularly significant for sleep is that DHEA works to suppress cortisol, a hormone that stimulates alertness and provokes stress at elevated levels. The study found that 68 percent of participants had increases to DHEA after using binaural beats.
- **Cortisol.** Cortisol is an arousal hormone, stimulating alertness and attention. Cortisol levels rise and fall in connection to circadian rhythms—cortisol levels rise to their peak levels first thing in the morning, just in time for you to be active for the day. Too-high cortisol levels are associated with insomnia, as well as more time spent in light sleep, rather than deep sleep. The study found that 70 percent of participants experienced a reduction in cortisol after exposure to binaural beats.
- **Melatonin.** Melatonin, as we have already discussed, promotes and regulates sleep. The study found 73 percent of participants had higher levels of melatonin after using binaural beats. The average increase was more than 97 percent.

Relaxation Response

The electronic production of alpha and theta patterns in the brain correlates well with Harvard mind-body medicine pioneer Herbert Benson's "Relaxation Response", which is the exact opposite of the "fight or flight response." The fight or flight adrenalin response takes blood flow away from the brain and toward the periphery of the body, increases heart rate, blood pressure and breathing, etc. In this state, learning abilities, as well as other mental functions including problem solving and reasoning ability, are markedly inhibited.³

The ability to reconcile and resolve disputes is also impaired. Quarrelsome? Not good!

The relaxation response, on the other hand, mobilizes us for inward activity by reducing heart rate and blood pressure, relaxing muscles, and increasing the percentage of oxygen flow to the brain. As one might expect, the fight or flight response is accompanied by low amplitude, high frequency beta brain wave patterns in the brain, while the relaxation response so beneficial to

learning and problem solving is accompanied by high amplitude, low frequency alpha and theta rhythms.

Good for the mind; good for the soul.

The Device Recommend!

In this day and age, we all need one of these devices. It's the perfect, soothing answer to modern stressful living.

The best device I know is called the **Brain Tap** and its developer, Dr. Patrick Porter, has helped to integrate my spoken mind journeys into his system. Among them: A Visit To Avalon, Journey To Atlantis, Tour of The Universe, Our Sun Meditation, Love, Gratitude, Forgiveness and "white light" (for pain).

Most importantly, there is a dedicated "sleep track" that's sure to put you to sleep, with its hidden brain induction, and my metaphors for getting to sleep (NOT including counting sheep, ahem!)

My additional tracks come FREE with your purchase of the device, in addition to the many factory-installed tracks. There is a small monthly fee for membership (not obligatory) and you can choose among thousands of other tracks. Just follow your fancy!

There is a special smartphone app to accompany the **Brain Tap** headset and ganz frames (goggles) set up. It's a delightful experience, comfortable to use and very easy.

Get yourself a **Brain Tap** device here: www.alternative-doctor.com/braintap

References:

1. Oster, Gerald. (1973). Auditory beats in the brain. Scientific American, 229, 94-102.
2. Hastings, Arthur. Tests of the sleep induction technique. Also a privately published manuscript, 1975
3. Benson, Herbert. The Relaxation Response. New York: Morrow, 1975.

The Desperation Remedy (sleep aid #29)

It's tough but it WILL work! It's very simple. When bedtime is looming you go for a long walk... and then some!

The way to do this is to walk away from home until you feel really tired. Then you turn around and walk back home. That should fix it!

Of course that's a laborious technique. But you wouldn't have to do it more than a few times. It need not—should not—be used as a routine. Just a last ditch sleep aid.

But don't forget, regular vigorous physical activity is good for sleep in general. Ask anyone who has been on a sailing holiday, a few weeks in a kibbutz or walked the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela!

Even gardening can be a great sleep remedy!

Tips For Coming Off Sleep Medications

Most sleep drugs are supposed to be for temporary use; at least that's what it says on the label insert. But most doctors ignore this point and may go on prescribing sleep medication to the same patient for months, or even years.

Sleeping pills and sedatives can have very strong side effects, including problems with memory or concentration, drowsiness, muscle weakness, abnormal behavior and sleep disorders. They can also affect people's ability to drive and, particularly in older and unwell people, increase the likelihood of falling.

One way to stop sleep medication is just go cold turkey but if your doctor has been naughty, prescribing heavy medications for sleep, such as SSRIs (Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, etc.), Benzodiazepines (Valium, Halcion, Restoril), or tricyclic antidepressants (such as amitriptyline), this is not an option. Don't try it. It may trigger seizures.

Instead, you need to taper off.

- For the first two weeks, take half of your usual nightly dose.
- When week three occurs, cut your dosage in half again. ...
- Continue that dose through week four.
- Keeping with that same dose, switch to taking it once every second night and then every third night, instead of every night of the week.

You can always stay on a dose for a longer period, until you feel comfortable and ready to take the next step in reducing the dose.

Experts say it is best to take 2 – 4 months to come off heavy sleep or tranquillizer medications.

If not done carefully or too abruptly, you may get a rebound withdrawal response that keeps you from sleeping well. Depending on the specific drug, symptoms can start within a few hours, but they may also be delayed,

sometimes occurring even weeks after use has been discontinued. Typical symptoms of withdrawal include trouble sleeping, restlessness, anxiety, shivering or circulation problems. They're similar to the symptoms that were originally targeted when using the sedative. We call this rebound insomnia.

"If you stop too quickly you can get rebound insomnia, which makes symptoms worse," says sleep expert Dr. Lawrence Epstein, an instructor in medicine at Harvard Medical School.

[\[https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-savvy-sleeper-wean-your-self-off-sleep-aids\]](https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-savvy-sleeper-wean-your-self-off-sleep-aids)

Rebound insomnia then convinces users they need the drugs to sleep. In reality, the medication is just preventing withdrawal symptoms. That cycle creates dependence, which is different from an addiction that's characterized by compulsive use and preoccupation with a drug that interferes with normal life.

Inositol (Remedy #30)

You may find inositol an invaluable help to getting off heavy meds. It probably works like GABA or maybe sensitizes the GABA receptors.

Inositol, or more precisely myo-inositol, is a vitamin-like substance in the B group (WebMD.com) that is abundant in brain and other mammalian tissues. Its chemical formula is exactly the same as glucose: $C_6H_{12}O_6$. But it does not have the same spatial structure as glucose (Wiki).

Inositol is very important for brain health, because of its relationship to neurotransmitters (brain signaling molecules), such as serotonin. It is known as a "second messenger" of serotonin and calms, soothes and induces relation. It is better (and more natural) than taking antidepressants and/or tranquilizers. Try it for sleep and comfort.

As a standard dietary supplement, it is suggested that people take between 1 and 3 grams of inositol daily. But for the brain and mental health, including better sleep, you need to take much higher doses, maybe 6 – 18 grams (not all at bedtime!)

However, some people find relief with lower dosages.

Therefore, it's best to start with a lower dose (1 teaspoon of powder) and work your way up to 15 - 18 grams (3 teaspoons) if necessary.

Other Help For Getting Off Sleep Medications

- cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), which helps you redirect your thoughts to reduce anxiety about sleeping. A number of moderate quality studies support the idea that more people stop taking sedatives

when they have psychological support.

[<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26106751>]

- relaxation techniques such as guided visualization
- recognizing the stimuli that prevent sleep, such as television, computer, or smartphone screens
- improving sleep hygiene, by using the bed for sleep and sex only; blocking as much noise and light as possible; going to bed and waking at the same times each day; and getting out of bed if you haven't fallen asleep within 20 minutes
- dietary changes, such as avoiding alcohol, caffeine, and foods that promote acid indigestion.

It's tough to get off medication but you have enough options here in this manual to find one or more suitable alternative to long-term or permanent medication, with all the attendant side-effects.

You will sleep better in the end, I promise, if you can dump medication and use a natural remedy instead.

For that reason, I have no hesitation in classifying this final quitting hack as **sleep aid #31!**

Good luck and sweet dreams!

End Note

If you have enjoyed these notes and found them useful, you may want to consider getting a copy of the bigger book "Sleep Engineering". There are lots of extra sections, including more homeopathic suggestions, and topics like "Why we yawn", "The recovery power of siesta" and details of a different, perhaps more useful, electronic device that does MUCH more than just induce sleep or calm: pain relief, injuries, infections, immune boosting and has even worked as a defibrillator (safe voltage).

In fact it has been described as "a hospital in your hand".

The book Sleep Engineering is available in both digital format and as a print copy (shipping and handling extra).

You can find out more details on this web page:

www.alternative-doctor.com/sleepengineering