

FALLING ASLEEP AND ANXIETY

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The time before you go to sleep can be a difficult one for anxiety sufferers. This is because all of the worries you have accumulated over the course of the day choose now to float through your mind.

Being alone in a dark room doing nothing but lying there with your worries allows you no distractions from them, which often allows them to seem to grow bigger and bigger and spiral out of control.

What to do?

To get to sleep more easily, you can try changing some of your pre-sleep habits to decrease your mental and physical stress levels. Habit changing takes time and persistence, but if you stick to these changes, you will find yourself adapting and feeling less anxious overall in no time.

Time Travel

- This is a fancy way of saying that at least an hour before you want to get to bed, you should try to turn everything off and do something that engages more of your mind than gazing at your computer or the television screen.
- Dimming the lights helps alert your brain to the idea that it should be sleeping soon.

- Doing something casual that still forces your mind to engage, such as reading, drawing, or playing cards will help occupy your brain with something other than the worries of the day.

Pick a Bedtime

- Deciding on a particular hour that you want to be in bed by will relax your body by providing it with a comforting, familiar routine to follow.
- It will also train your brain to get tired at a certain time of night, which will help you fall asleep sooner.

Keep a Journal

- Writing in a journal is another routine you can follow (and a good one to incorporate into your pre-bedtime time travel, as it doesn't involve any technology).
- Sometime before bed, jot down some thoughts about your day. If any worries or problems come up, be sure to write down possible solutions to accompany them.
- Once you do this, shut the book and imagine you are symbolically shutting away all the cares and thoughts from the day until you next want to open the journal and look at them.

Consciously Relax Your Body

- Once you are lying down in bed, try relaxing

your body one piece at a time.

- You can start with your toes, for example, but relax each toe individually. Then move up to your ankles, your calves, your thighs, and so on. Make sure each part is thoroughly relaxed before moving on to the next.
- You may start to feel tingly and almost numb. This is good: it means your body is getting ready to sleep.
- Once you are completely relaxed, focus on breathing comfortably until you fall asleep.

White Noise

- Some type of white noise, calming music, or easy to ignore radio may also be helpful.
- Often these things can distract your senses, making it harder for you to focus on your anxious thoughts.
- Try something like talk radio, with a volume so low that you can only hear what they're saying if you try extremely hard.
- The noise and talking will make it much more difficult to focus on your anxious thoughts.

Avoiding the anxiety that keeps you from getting the sleep you need can be difficult, but following the above all-natural and healthy techniques may help in taking back control over your sleep schedule.