



Session 2

# **Sleep Scheduling and Stimulus Control Techniques**

## Lesson 1: Sleep Scheduling Techniques

Two of the most important techniques in the Conquering Insomnia program that you will learn in this session are called **sleep scheduling** and **stimulus control techniques**.

**Sleep scheduling** involves learning to strengthen your sleep system by changing when you go to bed, get out of bed, and how much time you spend in bed; and limiting naps.

**Stimulus control techniques** are designed to strengthen your brain's association between the bed and sleep by making the bed a stronger cue for sleep.

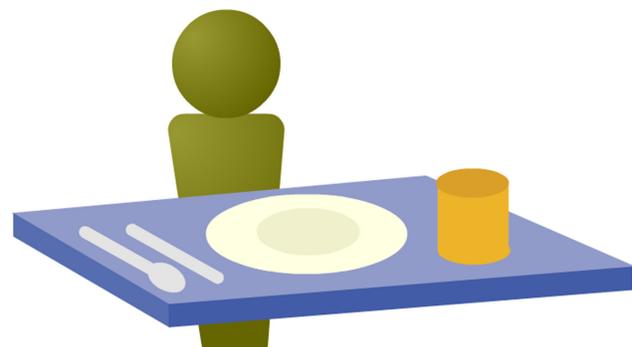
### *Prior Wakefulness, Sleep Efficiency*

To use sleep scheduling techniques, you must first understand the concepts of **prior wakefulness** and **sleep efficiency**:

- **Prior wakefulness** refers to the number of hours that have gone by from the time you get out of bed in the morning until you turn off the lights at bedtime to go to sleep. The greater the amount of prior wakefulness, the stronger the sleep system and the better you will sleep. Thus, the earlier you get out of bed and the later you go to bed, the better you will sleep.
- **Sleep efficiency** is the ratio of how much time you actually spend sleeping versus how much time you allot for sleep (from lights out at bedtime to arising time in the morning). Most poor sleepers average about 5.5 hours of sleep and allot just over 8 hours for sleep, which is a sleep efficiency of about 65 percent. This means that they are awake one-third of the time that they allot for sleep. As a result, the bed has become a strong cue for wakefulness one-third of the night instead of sleep.

### Key Concept:

Your goal will be to improve your sleep efficiency in order to make your bed a stronger cue for sleep.



## *A Regular Arising Time is Important*

The first sleep scheduling technique that we will discuss is **establishing a regular arising time**.

To make up for lost sleep, many people with insomnia sleep in on weekends or after a bad night's sleep. Although this may work in the short run by giving a few hours of extra sleep or bed rest, it also can cause insomnia in the long run for many reasons:

- It delays the rise and fall in your body temperature throughout the day, making it harder for you to fall asleep that night.
- It reduces your normal amount of prior wakefulness. As a result, you will weaken your sleep system and have a harder time falling asleep and staying asleep that night.
- Sleeping later on weekends is the main cause of Sunday night insomnia. Even if you think that Sunday night insomnia is caused by the mental adjustment of going back to work after the weekend, it is often due to later rising times on the weekends. This causes a delay in the body temperature rhythm and reduces prior wakefulness.

### *Tip #1: A Regular Arising Time*

Sleep scheduling tip number 1 is to get out of bed around the same time every day, including weekends, no matter how poorly you sleep. To do this, set an arising time goal, then set an alarm clock if necessary to stay within a half hour of that time each day. If you feel that you must sleep in after a bad night's sleep, limit yourself to one hour and not more than twice a week.



## *Temporarily Reducing Time Allowed for Sleep is Important*

The second sleep scheduling technique that we will explore is to temporarily reduce the time that you allow for sleep.

Sometimes people with insomnia go to bed early to get a head start on sleep, to increase the likelihood of being asleep at a certain time, or to catch up on sleep.

Going to bed early actually makes insomnia worse. This is because the earlier you go to bed and the more time you spend in bed, the more you reduce prior wakefulness. This weakens the sleep system and makes insomnia worse. In the long run, increased time in bed can also cause reduced sleep efficiency and makes the bed a strong cue for wakefulness.

### *Tip #2: Temporarily Reduce Time Allowed for Sleep*

Sleep scheduling tip number 2 is to reduce the time you allow for sleep (time from lights out to arising time in the morning), by going to bed later or getting up earlier, so that it more closely matches your average sleep time. You can determine your maximum allowed time for sleep goal by adding one hour to your average amount of nightly sleep for the week.

For example:

- If you are averaging 5 hours of sleep, allow no more than 6 hours for sleep.
- If you are averaging 6 hours of sleep, allow no more than 7 hours for sleep.
- However - If you are averaging less than 5 hours of sleep, allow 5½ hours for sleep

## **Tip #3: Know When to Go to Bed**

The third sleep scheduling technique that we will explore is knowing your earliest allowable bedtime.

Your earliest allowable bedtime goal (lights out time) is calculated by starting from your arising time goal and subtracting your maximum time allowed for sleep goal. For example, if you have determined that your arising time goal is 6AM and your maximum time allowed for sleep goal should be 7 hours (because you are averaging six hours of sleep), you should not turn your lights off to go to sleep before 11PM.

If you find it hard to stay out of bed until your earliest allowable bedtime goal, get moving. Use physical activity to keep you from getting sleepy. Walk around the house. Avoid stretching out on the couch in a dimly lit room the hour before your targeted bedtime. If you are reading or watching TV, walk around every tenth page of your book or during commercials or any time you are feeling very drowsy.

## **Tip #4: Limit Naps**

The fourth and final sleep scheduling tip is to limit naps. Naps should be no more than 45 minutes and no later than 3PM. Naps longer than 45 minutes or taken after 3PM can make it harder to sleep at night because naps often consist of Deep Sleep. If you get Deep Sleep during a nap, you have “borrowed” your Deep Sleep from the upcoming night. This weakens your sleep system.

Naps of 45 minutes or less and taken before 3PM will not disturb your sleep and will help you to feel more energetic and alert for the rest of the day, especially after a poor night's sleep. This is because we experience a dip in our mood and alertness in the mid-afternoon. The brain was designed to have a mid-afternoon nap so this is why you may feel sleepy after lunch. Research shows that naps as short as 10 minutes can help your mood and alertness.

If you take naps that are longer than 45 minutes or after 3PM, keep track of when you take naps and for how long over the next week.



## Lesson 2: Stimulus Control

### *Stimulus Control Techniques*

Now that you understand sleep scheduling techniques, let's turn our attention to stimulus control techniques.

Stimulus control is based on the idea that the bed can become a strong cue for frustration in people who have a hard time getting to sleep or staying asleep. As a result, just getting into bed sometimes can make you feel awake.

People who have a hard time sleeping sometimes do things that are cues for being awake. For example:

- Watching television in their bedroom long before bedtime
- Talking on the phone, studying, doing work, or problem-solving with a spouse
- Lying in bed long after waking up in the morning
- Trying to force sleep by “trying” to sleep. We cannot force sleep. In fact, this backfires and creates more mental and physical stress that keeps us awake.

Stimulus control techniques are designed to increase the association between the bed and sleep. By making the bed a stronger cue for sleep, you will fall asleep easier and stay asleep longer.

### *Stimulus Control, Step 1*

Here are the steps of stimulus control:

**Step 1: Only use your bedroom for sleep and sex.** Do not use your bed and bedroom to study or talk on the telephone, or as your primary room for watching television, etc. Your goal is to link your bed with sleep, not wakefulness.

### *Stimulus Control, Step 2*

**Step 2: Do not stay in bed longer than 30 minutes both before lights go out and after you wake up in the morning.** If you like to read or watch television in bed before bedtime do it only for 20-30 minutes. In the morning, get out of bed within 20-30 minutes of waking up. This will help you link your bed to sleep, not wakefulness.

### *Stimulus Control, Step 3*

**Step 3: Make sure you feel sleepy when you turn off the lights to go to sleep.** Otherwise, you are more likely to lie awake and think. Learn to rely on signs of drowsiness (such as eyes closing, head nodding) rather than the clock or your partner's bedtime.

### *Stimulus Control, Step 4*

Here is the last, and most important, step in stimulus control:

**Step 4: Do not lie in bed tossing and turning.** Remember that you should give yourself only 20-30 minutes to fall asleep. (Also, since you should not focus on the clock, you can estimate 20-30 minutes.) Get up, go to another room and do a quiet, relaxing activity (listening to music or reading a magazine or book) for at least 30 minutes or until you feel drowsy, then attempt to go to sleep again. Do this as often as needed until you fall asleep.

This is called the “½ hour-½ hour rule”.

You can also stay in bed and read when you cannot sleep as long as you go back to sleep within 30 minutes.

## More Step 4

You may be tempted to simply lie awake in bed when you cannot sleep hoping that, if you give it just a few more minutes, you will fall asleep. Or, you may believe that it is better to stay in bed when you cannot sleep because you think that getting up will make you more awake. However, studies show that the longer you lie in bed awake, the longer you will stay awake.

## Stimulus Control Steps

### Step 1

Only use your bedroom for sleep and sex.

### Step 2

Do not stay in bed longer than 30 minutes both before lights go out and after you wake up in the morning.

### Step 3

Make sure you feel sleepy when you turn off the lights to go to sleep.

### Step 4

Do not lie in bed tossing and turning.

## Lesson 3: Goals for Week 2

### Your Goals this Week

Now that you've completed Session 2, your goal this week is to keep adding to your sleep diary and to begin the sleep scheduling and stimulus control techniques.

### Week 2 Goal Tips

Remember to do the following this week:

- Complete your daily Sleep Diary.



**Key Concepts and Goals: Week 2**

**Key Concepts**

Chronic insomnia is caused by learned thoughts and behaviors that can be unlearned

CBT teaches you to strengthen your sleep system and weaken your wake system

Prior wakefulness refers to the number of hours that have passed from the time you get out of bed in the morning until you turn the lights off at bedtime to go to sleep

Sleep efficiency is the ratio of how much time you actually spend sleeping versus how much time you allot for sleep

Sleep scheduling tip #1: get out of bed around the same time daily, including weekends

Sleep scheduling tip #2: reduce the time you allow for sleep so that it more closely matches your average sleep duration

Sleep scheduling tip #3: determine your earliest allowable bedtime by starting at your arising time goal and subtracting your maximum allowable time in bed

**Goals**

Complete the Sleep Diary each morning.

**Use your bedroom mainly for sleep**

**Limit time in bed before lights out and after awakening to ½ hour**

**Follow the “½ hour-½ hour” rule**

**Get out of bed within a ½ hour of your arising time goal**

**Arising time goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Limit the time you allow for sleep (lights out to out of bed) to 1 hour more than your average sleep duration**

\_\_\_\_\_ + 1 hour = \_\_\_\_\_

Avg Sleep Duration

Time Allowed for Sleep

**Do not go to bed before your earliest allowable bedtime goal**

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Arising Time Goal

Time Allowed for Sleep

Earliest Bedtime