

## Wake Therapy

For those with the very worst insomnia, here are the big guns for sleep repair. The process takes typically 4-8 days and can work in even the toughest of cases. The first few of these days, you may be even more tired than normal. Don't schedule these first days when you are giving that make or break presentation or getting ready for final exams. To start this, it is helpful to estimate how many of hours of sleep you currently are getting, even if they are broken up. For example, if you finally fall asleep at 12:30, wake up at 2 AM, cannot get back to sleep until 3 AM and wake for good at 5 AM, this would be considered 4 ½ hours of total sleep. We will use this number in our planning.

Next, decide on your ideal time to wake up. Consider your school, work, family duties and think of the best time to start your day if sleep was not an issue. We can use 6 AM for purposes of this example. The general plan is that sleep is restricted to the number of hours your currently get, ending at your wake up time. You want to avoid sleeping at any other times of day. Gradually, the scheduled sleep times are expanded. Your rhythms are reset because your body gets so tired the first few nights; you cannot help but fall asleep. Once you have reset your rhythms, good sleep is automatic.

Here is how it works. Lets say you get 4 ½ hours of sleep on your own and you'd like to wake up at 6 AM. On the first day, you would stay awake until 4 ½ hours before 6 AM the first night. This would be 1:30 AM. At 6 AM you would wake up, using multiple alarm clocks if needed. Immediately after waking, let your body know that this is morning. You can do this by being outside in bright lights, moving in some way and being around people. A quick trip to a coffee shop can be an effective way to do this. During that whole first day, you want to do whatever you can to avoid napping. The next evening, you add 15 minutes to your sleep time without changing what time you wake up. In this example, that would mean going to bed at 1:15 AM. Again, wake up, be active and stay awake all day until bedtime. Each night go to be 15 minutes earlier. Continue this process until you are satisfied with your sleep. The vast majority of those with longstanding insomnia can get healthy sleep again by following this process carefully. This therapy is so powerful, many also use it to help come off from sleep aids. Of course you want support and assistance from your doctor for this.