

Retraining Your Brain

To associate your bed with sleep

Reasoning: After a prolonged period of sleep difficulties, many people start to associate the bed not with sleep, but with wakefulness, frustration & anxiety. There are techniques to help strengthening the association between *bed* and *sleep*, while weakening the association between *bed* and *lying awake/trying to sleep*. This is the most thoroughly researched behavioral treatment for insomnia & has decades of research support.

If you have **trouble staying awake** until your scheduled bedtime, try some of these activities:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Work on a project or hobby that you find interesting | <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to upbeat music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read a book that is hard to put down | <input type="checkbox"/> Turn on all the lights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watch a mystery or comedy show | <input type="checkbox"/> Go outside |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write a long letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a meal for tomorrow or for the rest of the week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Sort laundry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do some stretching exercises | <input type="checkbox"/> Organize computer files |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stand up and walk around | <input type="checkbox"/> Organize drawers & shelves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do some chores | |

Activities for the **middle of the night**, so you don't lie awake in bed:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Look through catalogues | <input type="checkbox"/> Shop for holiday, wedding or birthday gifts online or in catalogs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Update your address book or start a new one | <input type="checkbox"/> Read magazines or other light material |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sort junk mail & bills (but don't start paying them) | <input type="checkbox"/> Make a materials list for a project around the house |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play solitaire online or (ideally) with cards (just don't get too competitive) | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch infomercials, CSPAN, or the weather channel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catch up on your reading (as long as it's not too stimulating) | <input type="checkbox"/> Organize collections of CDs or DVDs & choose some to donate or sell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a grocery list for the coming week | <input type="checkbox"/> Give yourself a set amount of worry time & jot down anxious thoughts your mind is giving you on a notepad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create a detailed menu for dinners | <input type="checkbox"/> Knit or do other crafts you can stop once you feel sleepy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> De-clutter your coffee table, dining room table, kitchen countertops or desk | <input type="checkbox"/> Read your kids' books (they are often very comforting & positive) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create a list of activities that you'd enjoy doing on weekends & vacations | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work on a photo album or scrapbook | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fold & put away clothes | |

When you have a **hard time getting out of bed** at the same time each day – have a few go-to activities to start as soon as you hear the alarm. Such as:

- ☐ Meditate or pray
- ☐ Watch the sunrise
- ☐ Take yourself or the dog for a walk
- ☐ Read the news (online or the newspaper)
- ☐ Workout (at home or at the gym)
- ☐ Go to a store that opens early (like the grocery store)
- ☐ Make your lunch for the day
- ☐ Enjoy getting ready for the day without rushing
- ☐ Sort out things for a yard sale or to donate
- ☐ Start a budget
- ☐ Check your email
- ☐ Pay some bills
- ☐ Start preparation for dinner (marinating, chopping veggies)
- ☐ Make the bed & tidy up your bedroom
- ☐ Open the curtains/blinds throughout the house & turn on the lights
- ☐ Sweep your sidewalk/steps or shovel snow
- ☐ Do some light gardening or water your plants
- ☐ Review you to-do list for the day/week