

# Appendix 7.8

## Re-creating a Time and Place for Sleep



### Re-creating a time and place for sleep



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For good sleepers, the sleep period (nighttime) and sleep environment (the bed and bedroom) are strongly associated with sleep. Insomnia disrupts this association over time, the sleep period and environment that should be associated with sleep become synonymous with wakefulness and insomnia.

### Six strategies for reinforcing associations between the bed and bedroom, nighttime, and sleep:

- 1 Set aside at least one hour before bedtime for rest and relaxation.
- 2 Go to bed only when you feel sleepy.
- 3 If unable to fall asleep or fall back asleep in 15 to 20 minutes, get out of bed, engage in a calm activity, and go back to bed when sleepiness returns.
- 4 Get up at the same time each morning (using an alarm clock), regardless of how much you slept.
- 5 Reserve the bed and the bedroom exclusively for sleep.
- 6 Limit naps during the day.



It is important to apply all six strategies, not only those that seem most relevant or require the least effort.

- If you are already applying some of these strategies, it will be easier to focus on the strategies that you are not applying;
- These strategies may require several weeks of steady application before beneficial effects are experienced.

Adapted from: Ouellet, M.-C., Beaulieu-Bonneau, S., Savard, J., & Morin, C. M. (2015). *Insomnie et fatigue après un traumatisme craniocérébral : Manuel d'évaluation et d'intervention.*



### 1 Set aside at least one hour before bedtime for rest and relaxation.

- In the late evening, avoid sources of cognitive or emotional activation that can delay sleep (e.g., work, video games, physical exercise, and planning out the next day);
- Opt for activities that facilitate the transition between wakefulness, sleepiness, and sleep (e.g., reading, watching TV, listening to music, etc.);
- Reserve a specific time in the early evening (and not the late evening) to address worries or problem-solving;
- Establish a bedtime routine (e.g., taking a bath, brushing your teeth, removing makeup, or getting into your sleepwear).

### 2 Go to bed only when you feel sleepy.

- Going to bed too early, before you feel sleepy, is likely to delay your sleep and create a stronger association between your bed and bedroom and insomnia;
- If you are not sleepy when going to bed, delay your bedtime until you are - you will fall asleep more quickly;
- Be attentive to signs of sleepiness (associated with the transition from wakefulness to sleep): yawning, heavy eyelids, or itchy or watery eyes. Sleepiness is not the same as fatigue. It is possible to be mentally or physically fatigued without wanting to sleep, i.e., without being sleepy.

### 3 If unable to fall asleep or fall back asleep in 15 to 20 minutes, get out of bed, engage in a calm activity, and go back to bed when sleepiness returns.

- Getting up at night and changing rooms has two advantages: 1) breaking the association between the bed, bedroom, and insomnia; and 2) disrupting thought processes that linger when you stay in bed for a long time;
- Avoid looking at the time in order to know when you should get out of bed: if you think that 15 to 20 minutes have gone by or you will not be able to fall asleep soon, simply get out of bed;
- Decide in advance which room you will go in, which activity you will do, and what you will need (e.g., in the winter, leave a blanket in the room);
- Maintain a relatively dim environment or use a shaded lamp that will not shine directly into your eyes;
- Avoid falling asleep in the other room. Go back to bed, but only when you feel sleepy;
- Suggested activities: reading, listening to music, writing, or doing crossword puzzles;
- Activities to avoid: household chores, physical exercise, or electronic devices.

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### 4 Get up at the same time each morning (using an alarm clock), regardless of how much you slept.

- Use an alarm clock, both during the week and on the weekend, to regulate your sleep cycle and promote sleep on the following night;
- Choose an alarm clock that is loud enough to wake you up, but not too aggressive (e.g., the radio). Put the alarm clock somewhere out of reach, so that you need to get up to turn it off;
- Plan social or family activities early in the morning in order to increase your motivation to get up.

### 5 Reserve the bed and the bedroom exclusively for sleep.

- Avoid the following in your bedroom (during the day and night): reading, watching TV, listening to music or the radio, using a computer or smartphone, eating, working, planning, or worrying. Sexual activities are an exception, since they can lead to a state of relaxation that is conducive to sleep;
- Falling asleep to the sound of the TV or radio (or other music) is especially detrimental: your brain will continue to pay attention to what you are listening to, causing lighter sleep;
- As much as possible, it is important to always sleep in the same room and the same bed (avoid sleeping or dozing off in another bed, a couch, or a hammock);
- If your room is your living space (e.g., in a hospital, rehabilitation centre, or studio apartment), it is important to set aside a specific space for sleep (the bed) and a space for other activities (other than the bed).

### 6 Limit naps during the day.

- Avoid or limit naps in order to avoid adverse consequences on your sleep the following night:
  - Nap time:** the early afternoon is conducive to falling asleep quickly, but a late-afternoon or evening nap can disturb your night of sleep;
  - Nap duration:** brief (15 to 30 minutes) naps are more effective than long ones;
  - Nap location:** naps should be taken in the same place as sleep at night, i.e., in your bed.
- Find alternatives to naps in order to deal with sleepiness or fatigue during the day: listening to music, doing physical exercise, walking outside, or doing pleasant or social activities.

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