



Overcoming Insomnia Through Exercise

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If you're experiencing problems sleeping, there's a good chance you aren't getting enough exercise. Both mental and physical exercises are effective ways to help you experience a deeper, more restful sleep.

For some people, exercise is enough on its own to overcome their insomnia.

When you exercise, you're placing extra stress on your body and, in order to compensate for this added stress, your brain dictates a greater need for deep sleep to aid in recovery.

Bright Light and Your Internal Clock

Have you ever noticed during the warmer months, when you're outside and active, you tend to get tired earlier in the evening? This is due to the extended amount of time you're exposed to sunlight and the physical activity.

Exercising in a brightly lit area with a lot of sunlight increases your energy levels. Also, increasing your exposure to sunlight helps control your body temperature rhythms that regulate sleep.

What Are the Best Exercises for Fighting Insomnia?

Almost any physical activity can help you combat insomnia. However, there are a few particular exercises that seem to work better than others.

Here's just a sampling of exercises to overcome insomnia:

- ***Treadmill*** - Best when used next to an open window with plenty of sunlight pouring in
- ***Bicycling*** - The movement and constant concentration needed are especially effective.
- ***Stationary Bike*** - Not as effective as a real bicycle, but works great on rainy days
- ***Jump Rope*** - A good exercise to do that's stationery and requires little equipment

- **Dancing** - One of the most enjoyable ways to get exercise
- **Walking & Jogging Outside** - This is probably the easiest way to get exercise, exposure to sunlight and beat insomnia.

What Time is the Most Effective?

The best time to exercise is about 4 - 6 hours before bedtime. ***If you exercise just before you retire for the night, your body won't have enough time to cool down properly.*** This can make it harder to get to sleep. Remember that you should avoid caffeine or eating late, as well.

Get Your Mind Active, Too!

When you exercise your body and mind at the same time, you'll notice you'll get a deeper and more fulfilling night sleep. It's very easy to exercise your mind while you're involved in physical activity.

Some ways to do this while you're exercising are:

- Doing simple math problems in your head
- Reciting something you need to remember
- Listening to an audio book or podcast
- Reading a book, newspaper or magazine

Avoid doing the same exercises every day. Mix things up so your activities keep your body and mind fresh and active. Monotony causes the effectiveness of the activities, both physical and mental, to wane.

You may also want to keep a journal of your exercise activities and your sleeping hours. Once in a while, you can analyze what combination of exercises - both mental and physical - gave you the best sleep results. And once you're equipped with this newfound knowledge, you can create a custom workout, which will improve your health and help you beat the insomnia bug for good!