Get a Better Night's Rest

- Have a routine of when you go to sleep and when you get up, regardless of the day of the week. This gets the body on a healthy sleep-wake cycle.
- Get moderate exercise during the day, but not less than 2 hours before bed. It also helps to get some time outside in the sunlight to encourage your natural circadian rhythm.
- Make the bedroom a place of rest and relaxation. Take a few minutes to tidy up, have comfortable, clean bedding, and keep it cool & dark in the bedroom. Avoid working, reading, watching movies, etc. in bed.
- Keep your naps under 30 minutes during the day.
- Make time for 7-9 hours of sleep. Being sleep deprived can actually contribute to poor sleep, as the body loses its natural cycle.

Your bed-time countdown:

- 6 hours before bed: Switch to herbal teas and decaf coffee.
- 3 hours before bed: Eat a moderate-sized meal, avoiding overly spicy dishes and alcohol, which can affect the second half of sleep.
- 1 hour before bed: Turn off the cellphone, put away the computer and all work, and create a relaxing routine. The light from screens is especially disruptive to sleep, as it's blue-hue is stimulating to the brain. Read a book, listen to music or a podcast, have a cup of herbal tea (hops, valerian, and chamomile are all good choices) with a light snack, take a warm bath or shower, massage your feet with lavender oil in your favorite moisturizer or carrier oil, meditate or do gentle yoga; whatever you enjoy that helps clear your mind of the worries of the day and makes you feel calm and ready to sleep.
- Add warm layers like socks and fuzzy pajamas to keep toasty. If you are too cool, you might feel more restless and sleep lightly. You can try warming your low abdomen or back before going to sleep. Microwavable rice bags or hot water bottles are preferable but heating pads will work just fine; you just need to remove them before falling asleep.
- When you feel tired, go to bed, regardless of the time. This is especially important for people with a pattern of insomnia. The body will only send those signals once, and ignoring them alerts the sympathetic nervous system, which can keep you awake for an extended period.

Uh-oh, you can't sleep:

- If you find that you can't get to sleep after 20-30 minutes or you wake up in the middle of night and cannot get back to sleep within 15-20 minutes, then do not remain in bed "trying" to sleep. Get out of bed. Leave the bedroom. Read, have a light snack, do some quiet activity (no TV, phone, computer, etc.). You will generally find that you can get back to sleep 15 - 20 minutes later.