**Tips on Getting Enough Sleep**

It's easy to point to your schedule as the reason why you can't get enough sleep. By the time you get a free moment it's bedtime, and you really don't want to go to bed just yet; you need some down time. Then you stay up too late and the cycle continues.

There are all sorts of other reasons, too, for not getting enough sleep. Maybe you have a spouse who snores, or you just have trouble sleeping once you do get to bed (insomnia). Whatever the reason, it's important to make time and create the right environment for getting enough sleep. Here are some tips on how to do that.

**It's Bedtime**

Remember how your parents pestered you about bedtime? They had a point. Instead of looking at the ever-later clock each night, knowing you "really should" get to bed, set a bedtime and stick with it. Most experts agree that you should go to sleep before midnight, preferably before 11pm.

If this isn't possible, be realistic and set a bedtime when you know you can get it, even if it's midnight or 12:30am. Then be sure you get between 7 and 8 hours of sleep.

Another note about bedtime - if it's too early, that can cause problems too, experts note. If you find yourself fading to sleep at 7 or 8pm, you may find that you wake up in the small hours after only 5 or 6 hours' sleep, and you can't get back to sleep.

**Your Bedroom**

You may have a set-up in your bedroom that is not conducive to sleep. Here are some things to look for and adjust in your bedroom to make it more sleep-promoting.

\* Dark and cool is the rule for a sleepy bedroom. Darkness is important for a proper night's sleep - lights from neighbors' homes, screens (including the TV or computer screen), lamps, and so forth can disturb your sleep patterns.

Cooler temperatures are said to promote sleep. A higher body temperature may actually stimulate the body and prevent sleep, but cool temperatures help promote a comfortable night's sleep.

\* Your bed is for sleeping, not working. If you're in the habit of working on bills, office work, etc. while sitting on or in bed, you might be inadvertently training your brain to be stimulated when you are in your bed. Also, it's harder to walk away from work worries if you literally take them to bed with you! Try to keep your work in another room, or at least away from your bed.

\* Keep it quiet in your bedroom. If you have trouble in this regard, use a fan or other source of white noise at night to drown out disruptive sounds.

**Make Lists**

Do worries keep you awake? Do you have a hard time turning off your brain? Making a list may help. Write down all of those things that are bothering you or that you can't get your mind off of, and note some practical steps you can take in the morning (or during the upcoming day or week) to work those things out.