STIMULUS CONTROL PROCEDURES

- ***GO TO BED ONLY WHEN YOU ARE SLEEPY***

Go to bed only when sleepy. There is no reason for going to bed if you are not sleepy. When you go to bed too early, it only gives you more time to ponder events of the day, plan the next day's schedule, and worry about your inability to fall asleep. This serves only to increase concerns about insomnia and delay falling asleep. Internal monologues such as these are obviously incompatible with relaxation and sleep, and tend to strengthen the negative associations between the bedroom surroundings and sleeplessness. You should therefore postpone or delay your bedtime until you are sleepy.

As you implement this procedure, you must also adhere to the sleep window that was set for the current week. Thus, if you decided to go to bed at midnight, then you should not go to bed earlier than that time even if you are sleepy. Be aware, tiredness and sleepiness are different! Tiredness is a subjective feeling of exhaustion which does not necessarily involve physiological sleepiness. Sleepiness, however, results in a tendency to fall asleep. It is recognizable by signs such as yawning, heavy eyelids, or blurred vision.

- ***GET OUT OF BED IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO SLEEP WITHIN 15-20 MINUTES***

Get out of bed when you are unable to fall asleep or return to sleep within 15-20 minutes; go to another room and engage in some quiet activity. You can read, listen to music, watch a movie, or practice any similar non stimulating activities. Do not sleep on the couch. Return to bed only when sleepy. Repeat this step as often as necessary throughout the night – that is, when you first go to bed and upon nocturnal awakening. It will be difficult and demanding to follow this instruction. However, consistent adherence to this regimen will help reassociate your bed/bedroom with getting to sleep *quickly*.

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If you are like most poor sleepers, you toss and turn and keep postponing getting out of bed. You may think: “If I leave bed, I will be awake for the rest of the night. If I just stay in bed I will eventually fall asleep”, or else, “At least by remaining in bed I am getting some rest.” Nonetheless, remaining in bed and trying harder to go to sleep only **increases performance anxiety and frustration, and disturbs your sleep even further.** If you really want to break out of this vicious cycle, you should just get up. There is no need to watch the clock, as this alone will keep you awake. When about 15 to 20 minutes have passed and you’re still awake, you should pull yourself out of this spiralling situation. At this point, leave the bed and go to another room and engage in some quiet activity. Wait until sleepiness returns before returning to bed. Do not sleep on the couch because this will create an association between sleep and the couch, not sleep and your bed. **Initially, you may have to repeat these steps several times throughout the night**. It is important that you do so both when unable to fall asleep at bedtime **but also when you wake during the night and are unable to return to sleep**. It will be difficult and demanding to follow these instructions. However, **diligent adherence** to this regimen will help you to associate your bed and bedroom with getting to sleep **quickly**.

- ***MAINTAIN A REGULAR ARISING TIME IN THE MORNING***

Set an alarm and get out of bed at approximately the same time every morning based on your sleep window, **weekdays and weekends, and regardless of your bedtime or the amount of sleep you had the previous night**. This will help regulate your internal clock and synchronize your sleep-wake rhythm. If you have a tendency to turn off your alarm without waking up, place the alarm somewhere else, out of reach, so you are forced to get up to turn it off.

Catching up on sleep the next day or on the weekends is a very common practice to make up for sleep deprivation. This can be beneficial in the short-term, but people suffering from insomnia are particularly vulnerable to its

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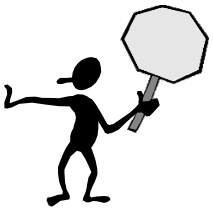
negative consequences. Although it can be difficult to maintain a strict and regular rise time on weekends, there are several measures you can take to facilitate this process:

- ⇨ Always use an alarm, even if you usually wake up before the desired rising time.
- ⇨ Schedule early social activities or family commitments to increase your motivation to get out of bed early.

- ***RESERVE YOUR BED AND BEDROOM FOR SLEEP AND SEX ONLY***



Do not read, eat, watch television, listen to the radio, work, or worry in your bed or bedroom either during the day or at night. **These activities are incompatible with sleep**. Sexual activities constitute the only exception, since they can have a relaxing effect. When you engage in other activities in your room, the environment becomes associated with **wakefulness** rather than **sleepiness and sleep**. You could argue that some people fall asleep reading in bed or take pleasure watching television in their room before bedtime. However, these people probably don't suffer from trouble sleeping. If you suffer from insomnia and you engage in such activities, it is highly recommended that you discontinue them completely. The goal is to restore a strong association between the bedroom environment and sleep.

- ***DO NOT NAP DURING THE DAY***

Routine daytime napping disrupts the natural sleep/wake rhythm and interferes with nighttime sleep. When you stay awake all day, you are sleepy at night. There is nothing wrong with napping in itself. A short nap can have a powerful revitalizing effect. However, for people who suffer from insomnia, napping can have **harmful effects**. Napping disrupts the natural sleep-wake rhythm and

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interferes with nighttime sleep. In fact, a nap late in the day **diminishes the quality of sleep and decreases the amount of deep sleep the following night**. The best advice is to **avoid napping**. If you stay awake all day, chances are you will be sleepier at bedtime.

Exception to the rule. In the early phase of sleep restriction, a limited nap is made optional if you feel very sleepy (not just tired!) during the day. As treatment unfolds and nocturnal time in bed is increased, it is preferable to eliminate this option. For this exception, napping should be limited to no more than 15-20 minutes and scheduled before 3:00 pm in order to minimize interference with nighttime sleep. To strengthen the association between sleep and the bedroom environment, napping should be restricted to the bedroom. It should also be curtailed if no sleep has occurred within 15-20 min of getting into bed.

- ***LEAVE AT LEAST 1 HOUR TO UNWIND BEFORE YOU GO TO BED***

Use this time for reading, watching television, listening to music or conversing with someone**, but do this somewhere other than your bedroom**. As you get closer to bedtime, it is best not to rehash events of the day or plan tomorrow's schedule as this can create **mental stimulation** and make it harder to sleep. Set aside another time during the day or early evening to deal with worries and to do problem-solving. If you cannot get rid of the worries or concerns, it often helps to write them down and plan to deal with them at another time.

3. IN CONCLUSION

The self-management program is a highly structured regimen that requires **time**, **patience**, **effort** and **practice**. The recommendations are fairly straightforward; putting them into practice may be more difficult, and obstacles along the way are to be expected. **Strict adherence to the procedures is essential**. **You cannot choose only those procedures which seem easiest to apply**. All of the procedures work together. You may find that sleep gets worse for the first few nights, or that you wake up in the morning feeling more exhausted than usual. Do not get discouraged, this is **normal** early on in the treatment. The benefits

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will become more evident with time and repeated practice. The single most important factor in determining whether your sleep will improve is the consistency with which you follow the instructions.

Remember though, this is a small price to pay if you have suffered with sleep difficulties for months or years. Also, keep in mind that it takes time to integrate any new learning experience, and that the secret to success lies in repetition. At first, it may feel unnatural to get out of bed in the middle of the night while everyone else is sleeping. In time, these changes will become easier to implement, and once you have beaten insomnia, you may no longer have to think about any of these practices. **Changing ingrained habits is not an easy thing to do, but it is essential if you want to succeed in overcoming insomnia.**

Procedures to overcome treat insomnia (reminder)

- Restrict your time in bed to the actual amount of sleep (Sleep Restriction)
- Allow at least an hour before bedtime to unwind and relax
- Go to bed only when sleepy
- If you are unable to fall asleep or fall back to sleep within 15-20 minutes get out of bed and find something else to do in another room
- Repeat this procedure as often as necessary during the night
- Get up at the same time every morning, even on weekends, regardless of the number of hours of sleep you got the previous night
- Reserve your bed and bedroom for sleep and sex only
- If you must take a nap during the day, it must not last over 20 minutes and must occur before 3:00pm

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WHAT TO DO WHEN I LEAVE THE BEDROOM?

You may be hesitant to leave the comfort of your bed, concerned that you may be too cold or that you won't know what to do while waiting for sleepiness to come back. To prevent these difficulties, be prepared to rise during the night: keep a warm blanket near the bed, reserve a comfortable place in the house (other than the bedroom), and plan certain activities that can be done there. These activities should not be so exciting that your mind becomes too active, nor should they be so boring that you have no motivation to get up; they should also not be too enjoyable, resulting in decreased motivation to return to bed. Lastly, they should not require too much preparation such that you remain awake longer than needed. Here is a list of suggested activities to fill the periods when you are awake during the night, as well as a list of activities to avoid. These are not, of course, exhaustive lists. Please try to come up with your own list.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES	DISCOURAGED ACTIVITIES
• Reading • Doing crossword puzzles • Listening to soft music • Writing • Drawing • Meditating • Watching light television	• Doing housework, cleaning • Taking a walk or exercising • Working/chatting on the computer • Playing a video game • Worrying • Watching stimulating television or movies

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