



Acupuncture 4 Insomnia

I give Kayte 100% credit for totally fixing the insomnia problem that afflicted me from 12-23 years old. It was chronic and hellish. When I express the magnitude of the good you did for me, it's hard to avoid drawing the relationship to a miracle! You gave me what it takes to unlock my potential.

- Adam McLean

Insomnia has several different manifestations. For some, the inability to fall asleep is the most noticeable symptom. Others are unable to reach a deep level of sleep and are startled awake by every noise. Some awaken several times a night for a few minutes; others are up once a night for a couple of hours.

Any insomnia symptom would frustrate most sleepers, but night after night for months or years, the most serious consequences of insomnia accumulate - the daytime effects. These can include physical tiredness, difficulty concentrating and feeling depressed, irritable or lethargic.

Insomnia is not an illness in itself – with some exceptions – but rather a manifestation of an underlying problem. True insomnia is defined as poor sleep followed by daytime fatigue. Because sleep needs, such as number of hours, varies for different people, the real issue of insomnia is quality of feeling during the day.

Oriental medicine is a gentle, effective insomnia remedy. Because a sleep disorder can have many causes, such as depression, anxiety, trauma, bereavement or emotional upset, your practitioner will focus on your individual insomnia symptoms, and build a whole-healing plan from each symptom. Acupuncture also has been widely successful in treating depression, stress and physical pain.

Treating insomnia can take some time. Unlike sleeping pills or other medications, acupuncture's side effects are the positive benefits of bringing one's whole system into balance and harmony.

Insomnia Self Help

Exercise

Physical activity can help regulate everything from hormones to digestion. Try yoga or tai chi for physical relaxation.

Pay attention to your thoughts

Experiment with stress management techniques, guided imagery, biofeedback, and other approaches for managing mental stress.

Be a detective

Keep a diary of sleeplessness. Record time of wakefulness, food/drink ingested, work stress, moon phase, and other possibly related factors. There are several good apps for your phone or other device that can help.

Avoid stimulants

Figure out what stimulates you. Consider eliminating caffeine, alcohol, refined sugar, chocolate, etc.

Be predictable

Create a bedtime ritual and follow it all week. Only sleep in your bedroom. Read, watch TV, eat, and exercise elsewhere. Don't sleep in on weekends.

Sleep in a cave

Disconnect from electronics, lower the lights, and unwind for an hour before bed. Install black out curtains in your bedroom. Reduce the temperature of your bedroom (add an extra blanket to your bed if you sleep cold.)

Get some sunshine

Our body clocks get set by exposure to sun. Get sunshine first thing to help your body be ready to sleep in about 14 hours.

Get body work.

Chiropractic care, craniosacral therapy, and massage offer benefits of improved circulation and pain relief.

It works.

A systematic review of studies concluded that acupuncture was significantly more effective than benzodiazepines for treating insomnia. Acupuncture also appeared to be better at improving sleep than sleep hygiene counseling.

Traditional needle acupuncture treatment for insomnia: A systematic review of randomized controlled trials. Sleep Med. 2009 Mar 18.

A pilot study shows that acupuncture can improve the sleep pattern of patients with obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA). Apnoea scores, micro-arousals, and number of nocturnal respiratory events decreased significantly.

Immediate effect of acupuncture on the sleep pattern of patients with obstructive sleep apnoea. Acupunct Med. 2010 Jun 15.

In a study of 18 anxious subjects, five weeks of acupuncture treatment was associated with significant improvements in a variety of sleep determinants, reduction in anxiety and nocturnal increase in endogenous melatonin secretion.

J Neuropsychiatry Clin Neurosci. 2004 Winter;16(1):19-28.