



Exercise: Limiting the amount of time spent in bed

Goal

Build sleep pressure to make it easier to fall asleep and reduce the number of nocturnal awakenings.

Instructions

Calculate your sleep efficiency

A normal sleep efficiency is considered to be 85% on average. Once you know how to calculate your sleep efficiency, you will be able to tell how close to the target you are. Sleep efficiency is calculated by dividing the amount of time spent asleep by the total amount of time spent in bed.

The idea is that you do not spend any longer in bed than you slept on average during the previous week.

For example, if you sleep seven hours on average and you want to get up at 8.00 a.m., you should aim to go to bed at 1.00 a.m. Your wake-up time should be the same regardless of the day of the week.

You will most likely start going to bed later than what you are used to. Trust the technique; it will help you to build up enough sleep pressure, which is one of the prerequisites for falling asleep.

Never limit the amount of time you spend in bed to less than six hours, however.

Remember to also observe the 15-minute rule while doing this exercise: If you find that you are still awake after 15 minutes, get out of bed and move to your alternative relaxation spot. Use the table and examples below as a guide.

Example of how to limit the amount of time spent in bed

Take a look at the examples below. Then fill out the template with your own data based on your sleep diary.

Sleep efficiency (%) over one week	6/9 = 67%
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Average sleep time over one week	6 hours
Recommended amount of time in bed:	6 hours

Plan your schedule around your wake-up time in the morning. Keep your wake-up time the same regardless of the day of the week for a period of at least two weeks.

I get up at	7 a.m.
I go to bed at (Your bedtime is calculated based on your wake-up time and the recommended amount of time in bed: 7 a.m. [wake-up time] minus six hours [recommended amount of time in bed] equals 1 a.m.)	1 a.m.

My schedule

Sleep efficiency (%) over one week	
Average sleep time over one week	
Recommended amount of time in bed:	
I get up at	
I go to bed at	