If your sleep is disturbed more than three times a week, and the trouble has gone on for at least a month, discuss it with your doctor; he or she might recommend a sleep specialist. If, however, your sleep problems are not too severe, or are the result of poor sleep habits, read on.

1. **Make your bedroom a haven.**
   Is your mattress as soft or as firm as you like? Are your bedclothes comfortable? Temperature and humidity OK? Is the room quiet and dark enough for you? (Wear earplugs or a mask if need be.)

2. **Come up with a bedtime routine.**
   Go to bed at about the same time every night, and follow the same routine so your body will know you’re ready to bed down. Dim the lights, drink a cup of herbal tea—or take a bath, read or listen to music to smooth the way from wakefulness to sleepiness.

3. **Get up at around the same time each morning, weekends too.**
   Such constancy will reinforce your biological clock’s sleep-wake cycle. Use your bed for sleeping. Move the TV (computer; tablet or smartphone) out of the bedroom; also don’t read, talk on the phone, or snack in bed.

4. **Don’t lie in bed and stare at the ceiling.**
   If you can’t fall asleep after a while, or if you wake up in the middle of the night, get up and read, listen to music or do some deep breathing to encourage sleep. (But do not exercise!)

5. **Eliminate daytime naps.**
   Some people get quite drowsy in the afternoons and doze off for a while. But if they do take a nap, they may have trouble sleeping that night—and so the following day, they’ll have to take another nap to make up for the previous night’s lost sleep.

6. **Exercise regularly.**
   Exercising in the daytime can help you feel tired and relaxed in the evening. If you’re not already exercising, ask your doctor to help you devise a workout. Avoid exercising within three hours of bedtime, since vigorous activity at that time can drive away sleep.

7. **Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol.**
   All three of these drugs can cause poor-quality sleep, particularly if consumed late in the day. Smokers often experience troublesome withdrawal symptoms while trying to sleep; caffeine stays in the body for many hours before it can be eliminated; and alcohol is actually a stimulant that can also disrupt sleep.

8. **If your partner snores loudly or thrashes around while asleep...**
   either move to a different room or ask him or her to see a doctor. Snoring can often be due to some treatable medical condition like a sinus blockage, thyroid imbalance, sleep apnea or obesity. Jerking and thrashing may be due to restless leg syndrome.

9. **Use sleeping pills only as a last—and temporary—resort.**
   In certain circumstances, hypnotic medications may be useful for sleeplessness but they’re not a replacement for good sleep habits. If your insomnia has gotten to the point where sleeping pills are sounding like a good solution, talk with your doctor.

Learn more at Healthy.Wor ks/Balance
Additional Resources

Center for Workplace Mental Health
http://workplacementalhealth.org

National Institute of Mental Health

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
http://www.nami.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Mental Health.gov
https://www.mentalhealth.gov

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org

National Council for Behavioral Health
https://www.thenationalcouncil.org

Veterans & Families – Mental Health Resources
https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov

National Institutes of Health (NIH)
National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH)
https://nccih.nih.gov/health/stress