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Put Insomnia to Rest!

Our society puts a premium on our waking hours, and we thus have the tendency to underestimate the importance of a full-night's sleep. Millions of people who suffer from insomnia look for quick fixes instead of exploring the root causes of the problem. Sleep hygiene is an afterthought for many people. Evening is a time to allow our minds and bodies to turn inward to our subconscious. Sleep deprivation is the root of many health issues like memory impairment, a weakened immune system and stress that can lead to cardiac disease, heart disease and digestive disorders.



Exposure to the diminishing light at dusk helps regulate sleep hormones in the body. Excessive lighting at night, evening shift work, evening computing, video games, television and late-night eating all serve to counteract the body's natural rhythms. It's no wonder people have trouble sleeping. Rather than embrace nighttime as rest time, we tend to let our minds wander from one element of stress to another, which can keep us up for hours or perhaps an entire evening. We are then forced to approach the new day without having benefited from the regenerative powers that nighttime brings.

In Oriental medicine, sleep occurs when the yang energy of the day folds into the yin energy of nighttime. Yin energy of the body is cooling and restorative; it is the time of day when our bodies turn inward and regenerate. This is the time we dream and explore the caverns of our unconscious mind. Conversely, daytime is yang, which is expansive. We expend the energy we have built up from the process of sleeping. Together, this is the cycle of yin and yang.

To apply this yin-yang concept to your everyday life, try eating your last meal at least three hours before going to bed. For example, you can "cool" your yang energy down by avoiding hot and spicy food and drink. Avoid alcohol, coffee, chocolate and any other stimulants, especially late in the day.

To improve your sleep cycles, help circulate your body's energy by working out or with gentle exercise. Build your body's nutritive aspect by eating marrow-based soups and stews, dark pigmented vegetables and fruits. Avoid overworking or over rumination as well.

An invaluable tool to help your brain unwind is meditation. It helps the body create a sense of calm. Meditation can reduce stress, increase feelings of well-being and improve overall health. It can help one increase alertness, relaxation and reflection even in "waking" states. Meditation is best practiced during the day to help improve your sleep patterns at night.

If you or someone you know suffers from insomnia, call today to see what acupuncture and Oriental medicine can do for you!

Sufferers of Chronic Fatigue Find Relief With Oriental Medicine

Chronic fatigue syndrome is far more than just being tired, it is a complicated disorder characterized by extreme fatigue that may worsen with physical or mental activity and does not improve with rest. Those affected with chronic fatigue syndrome can get so run down that it interferes with the ability to function in day-to-day activities, with some becoming severely disabled and even bedridden. In addition to extreme

fatigue, chronic fatigue syndrome encompasses a wide range of other symptoms including, but not limited to, headaches, flu-like symptoms and chronic pain.

If you suffer from chronic fatigue syndrome, Oriental medicine can help relieve many of your symptoms. Exceptional for relieving aches and pains, acupuncture and Oriental medicine treatments can help you avoid getting sick as often and assist with a quicker recovery, as well as improve your vitality and stamina.

Research on Chronic Fatigue and Acupuncture

A study in China evaluated cupping as a treatment for chronic fatigue syndrome. All of the study patients complained of fatigue and some had additional problems with headaches, insomnia, muscle-joint pains, backaches and pains, poor memory, gastrointestinal disturbances and bitter taste in their mouth, among other things. Patients ranging in age from 28-54 received sliding cupping treatments twice a week for a total of 12 treatments. The results showed there was vast improvement in fatigue levels, insomnia, poor memory, spontaneous sweating, sore throat, profuse dreams, poor intake, abdominal distention, diarrhea, and alternating constipation and diarrhea.



In another study conducted at the First Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou University of TCM in Guangzhou, China, subjects with chronic fatigue syndrome were evenly divided by random selection into an acupuncture group and a control group. The observation group was treated with acupuncture and the control group was treated with an injection. Participants completed a fatigue scale and results showed that people who received acupuncture reported significantly more relief from their symptoms. A similar study conducted in Hong Kong gave half of the group conventional needle acupuncture and half (the control group) sham acupuncture. Again, using a fatigue scale, improvements in physical and mental fatigue were significantly bigger in the acupuncture group and no adverse events occurred.

Most significantly, 28 papers were statistically reviewed through a meta analysis in order to assess the success of acupuncture as a therapy for chronic fatigue syndrome. The results showed that treatment groups receiving acupuncture for chronic fatigue syndrome had superior results when compared with control groups. Rightly, they concluded that acupuncture therapy is effective for chronic fatigue syndrome and that it does merit additional research.

If you are struggling with chronic fatigue syndrome, call today to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can be incorporated into your treatment plan!

Tips for a Restful Night

Sound sleep is the foundation of good health. We need 6-8 hours of sleep every night to recharge our batteries.

Practicing good sleep hygiene and keeping your body in sync with the rhythm of day and night can help your body cope with sleep deprivation and give it an opportunity to get stronger and heal.

By implementing just a few of these suggestions, you should notice a great improvement in your sleep and how you function during daylight hours.

Ambiance

Make your bedroom a sanctuary. Keep it dark, cool and quiet. Angle the clock face away from the bed. If you get up to use the bathroom during the night, don't turn on the light; use a nightlight to safely guide you. The optimal temperature for sleep is 60 to 68 degrees Fahrenheit.

When Hungry

Avoid heavy meals and sugary or high grain snacks before bed. They will raise your blood sugar and make it difficult to fall asleep. Reduce nicotine, caffeine and alcohol use.

If you are hungry, eat a high protein snack a couple of hours before going to bed. Try yogurt, a banana or half of a turkey sandwich.

Reduce Late Night Activity

Stop working at least an hour before you plan to go to bed. Let your mind relax. Limit television and computer use in the evening.

If you want to read in bed, avoid backlit devices as the light stimulates the brain. Read a book or use a device that requires you to use a separate soft light source.

Bedtime Routine

Establish a relaxing routine as you prepare for bed. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time everyday, even on weekends.

Relax by taking a hot shower, practicing mediation, or try progressive muscle relaxation, starting at your toes and working up to the top of the head.

It is important to leave the day's worries behind. Do not overthink your day while you lie in bed. Take a deep breath, clear your mind and drift into a state of restful sleep.

