The Day After a Bad Night’s Sleep

How you might feel if you slept poorly last night — and how to sleep better tonight

7:45 a.m.
You finally haul yourself out of bed after hitting snooze too many times. Insomnia struck and you couldn’t sleep last night. Now you’re running late.

Sleep Tip: As tempting as it may be to sleep in after a rough night’s rest, getting up at the same time every day can reduce your risk of insomnia. Sleep experts suggest a regular wake-up time that doesn’t vary by more than an hour, even on the weekend.

10:15 a.m.
You’re having a hard time concentrating on your work, so you stumble to the break room for some coffee — and can’t resist grabbing a donut from the box on the counter.

Sleep Tip: Lack of sleep can increase your cravings for carb-heavy comfort foods. Keep a stash of almonds or other fiber-rich snacks in your desk drawer. A diet high in saturated fats and sugar may worsen your quality of sleep, but a high-fiber diet may help you get deeper sleep.

12:30 p.m.
Normally you enjoy chatting with your coworkers over lunch, but your social anxiety is spiking today. You put your earbuds in and eat at your desk.

You’re definitely going to fall asleep at your desk if you don’t get up and move around.

Sleep Tip: Take an afternoon walk around the block. Fresh air and exercise are key to a good night’s sleep. If you can’t go outside, get up and walk around inside for a few minutes.

3:00 p.m.
You’re supposed to meet friends after work, but you’re way too tired. You feel guilty and embarrassed about your insomnia because it’s not the first time your insomnia has forced you to bail on plans.

5:00 p.m.
Bedtime! Even though you’re exhausted, you can’t help worrying that insomnia will strike again tonight.

Sleep Tip: If insomnia is taking a toll on your social life, try having an honest conversation with your loved ones about your sleep struggles. Chances are they’ll be supportive, and sharing may ease some of the relationship-related guilt keeping you up at night.

10:00 p.m.

Sleep Tip: Learn to replace negative thoughts about sleep (“I’ll never get to sleep tonight.”) with positive ones (“If I relax peacefully in bed, my body will take care of itself.”).

If you struggle with insomnia, talk to your healthcare provider about any other tips that might help you fall asleep and stay asleep — and ask whether medicine is a good option for you.