

Sleep Restriction

Although you may want to sleep a certain amount of time (e.g., 8 or 9 hours), right now your body is only producing a certain amount of sleep. So, even if you spend long periods of time in bed, your body will not sleep for that entire time, resulting in feelings of frustration and poor quality sleep. Sleep Restriction is used to more closely match the amount of time you spend in bed with the amount of sleep your body is producing. The following provides guidance on how to use Sleep Restriction to help you sleep.

1. **Limit your time in bed to _____.** This number is based on the information you provided about your average sleep duration (plus a little time to fall asleep). This means you should have a bedtime of _____ and a wake time of _____.
2. **Don't go to bed earlier than you are supposed to.** Although you may feel sleepy, if you go to bed too early your internal clock may not be ready to sleep and you may not have enough sleep pressure to help you fall asleep. Alternatively, you may go to bed early but then only sleep 1 to 2 hours and be up for the rest of the night. In other words, you are simply taking a late evening nap that interferes with your ability to get nighttime sleep.
3. **Go to bed only if you are sleepy (and not before your scheduled bedtime).** Again, if you are not sleepy, going to bed too early will only cause stress and frustration that you are not sleeping. By keeping a consistent bedtime and wake time you are also helping to set your internal clock, as well as building up sufficient sleep pressure to fall asleep.
4. **Wake up and get out of bed at the designated wake time.** Even if you haven't had the best night of sleep, it is really important that you stick to the set wake time of _____, **even on weekends.** Although challenging, it is really important to provide your internal clock with a consistent schedule. Also, if you sleep in, you may not have enough sleep pressure to help you fall asleep quickly at bedtime.
5. **If at all possible, no napping!** Unless you have activities that may be unsafe if you do not have a short nap, naps will interfere with your ability to fall asleep at night by reducing your sleep pressure.

Calculating Sleep Efficiency

The goal of sleep restriction is to have sleep efficiency of at least 85% before increasing the amount of time you spend in bed. *Sleep efficiency* is the proportion of time you spend sleeping compared with the amount of time you spend in bed. Specifically:

$$\text{Total Sleep Time} / \text{Time in Bed} \times 100$$

For example, if you went to bed at 11:00 p.m. and woke up at 7:00 a.m., your time in bed is 8 hours. But if it took you 1 hour to fall asleep and you were awake for 1 hour during the night, your total sleep time is only 6 hours.

$$6 / 8 \times 100 = 75\%$$

Until you have an 85% or higher sleep efficiency for at least a week, you should not go to bed any earlier or wake any later than the set times you've been given.

Although it may seem strange to hear that you should stay up later when your goal is to sleep more, until your body learns to sleep more efficiently you need to limit how much time you spend in bed. For the first few nights, it may feel as if you are sleeping less than before, but soon you should be falling asleep faster and waking less frequently or for shorter periods of time.
