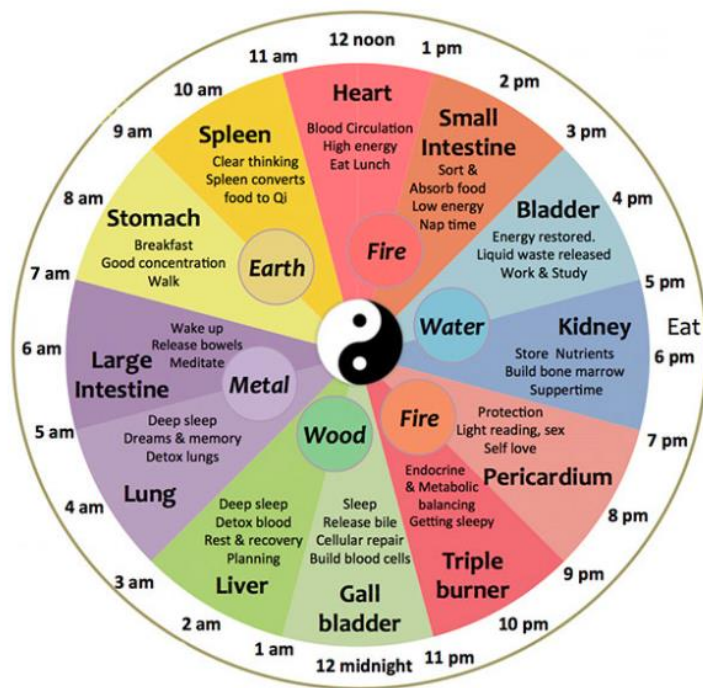


Sleep Better

Reasons Why You May Be Waking Up At Night

When repeated issues occur at the same time of the day it could be an indication that the organ working at that time is struggling.



1. Stress/Detox overload on the liver
2. Low Blood Sugar/Wake up hungry
3. Nature Calls
4. Anxiety/Depression
5. Pain
6. Hormonal Changes/Menopause
7. Sleep Apnea

Sleep Hygiene... things you might try

- 1) According to Chinese medicine 1-3AM is the peak time for the liver to carry out its essential functions. If it is repeatedly overtaxed by stress or detox processes during the day it may not have the energy needed to do its peak work at 3AM. It will instead default to adrenaline for energy, which will keep you awake.
 - a) Detox - the liver is responsible for processing fatty foods, refined sugars and alcohol. Might you need to make some dietary changes to unburden you liver?
 - i) Reduce your alcohol consumption / increase fruits and veggies to replace processed foods / drink dandelion tea to support liver detox function
 - b) Stress - the liver is also responsible for “coursing the Qi” throughout the body. When the Qi becomes stuck or stagnant: we get cold hands and feet, digestive issues, HA’s, irritability, PMS, waking at night.
 - i) Getting regular exercise is #1. If you didn’t get exercise today then...walk or run around the block OR do sit ups and stretches OR 5 min of yoga and breathing *before bed*.
 - ii) Acupuncture or acupressure at points Liver 3 and Large Intestine 4 can help “course the Qi”.
- 2) When blood sugar drops it can trigger a release of stimulating hormones such as cortisol and epinephrine. These hormones can wake you up feeling hungry.
 - a) Eat a small snack before bed that is primarily a protein/fat (nuts, nut or seed butter, lunch meat, egg).
 - b) Consider your caffeine intake and reduce the amount or how late in the day you drink it.

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3) If you are waking up needing to go to the bathroom you want to rule out:

- a) For men, an enlarged prostate and for everyone the potential of pre-diabetes (poor diet or family history?).
 - i) You may just be drinking too many fluids, including alcohol, before bed. Cut back and see what happens.

4) If suffering with anxiety and/or depression it can be common to toss and turn for an hour or more, worrying about various things and then wake up at 3AM in a panic, unable to get back to sleep. Here are some ways to try to get back to sleep.

- a) Try NOT to be in bright light or use a screen, this can interfere with melatonin levels (the hormone that promotes healthy circadian rhythms)
- b) The cycle of REM deep sleep is about 5 hours, after this you cycle into light sleep, during which it becomes easier to be woken up.
 - i) Keep earplugs and or an eye pillow near by to help reduce external stimuli from more easily waking you during the time of lighter sleep.
- c) Distract yourself in a calming way...
 - i) Box Breathing – breath in to a count of 4, hold for a count of 4, exhale for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4, Repeat... increase the number of seconds up to 8 after a few rounds of each.
 - ii) Progressive Relaxation – close your eyes and focus on each muscle of the body starting with the head and face and working your way down, first tensing and then relaxing the muscle, breathing deeply all the while.
 - iii) Free Apps to Listen to: Sleep With Me (calming ramblings) / Insight Timer (guided meditation)
 - iv) Read a book – if on your phone switch the screen background to nighttime mode
 - v) Supplements: Melatonin, Vit D or sunshine (to support melatonin production), Lavender (oral or topical essential oil), Cortisol Manager by Integrative Therapeutics
 - vi) Make sure your sleeping area is cool and dark.

5) A bad mattress or improper pillow can aggravate pain and wake you up. You may need to address 1 or both...

- a) For most people, exercise, stretching and basic strength conditioning are the foundations to managing and reducing musculoskeletal and joint pains.
- b) Consider if your mattress or pillow is old and unsupportive, too firm or makes you feel hot.

6) Decreases in estrogen can result in hot flashes and night sweats, which can wake women up. Decreases in progesterone can result in more significant feelings of irritability and more difficulty feeling relaxed.

- a) Some women have found that cotton bedding is better than down for temperature regulation.
- b) Consult with your PCP, ND or LAc for support moving through these symptoms more easily.

7) You may find that you never wake up feeling rested, that you wake up many times per night but aren't able to go back to sleep or your partner may be able to tell you if you seem to stop breathing for periods of time throughout the night.

- a) Consult with your PCP - you may need to do a sleep study to determine if you have sleep apnea and need a CPAP machine for a better nights rest.

Sleep is the time when our brains are very active repairing, regenerating and converting short-term memories into long-term memories. Our bodies cells are also regenerating and producing energy for proper daily functioning. Without regular, restful sleep our bodies are at greater risk for heart disease, weight gain and reduced immune and brain function. Working on our sleep habits is one of the most important things we can do for our long-term health.

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Here's to a good nights sleep soon!!

