

APPENDIX 3.3: STIMULUS CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS

A person's body should automatically associate getting into bed with going to sleep. Sometimes people develop habits that may make the bedroom a nonsleep promoting environment. Using the bed or bedroom for other activities (e.g., reading or watching TV, planning what needs to be done the next day), may cause a person's body to associate getting into bed with being awake; this may interfere with sleep. Stimulus control helps break this association and reestablish the bed and bedroom as a sleep-promoting place. Follow all six instructions to increase the likelihood that you will sleep well.

1. **Don't use your bed or bedroom for anything (any time of the day) but sleep (or sex).** Doing other things in bed is "misusing" the bed. There is an appropriate time and place for everything. Doing other things reinforces the notion that a variety of actions are appropriate in that setting (e.g., if you often watch television in bed, going to bed will become a cue to begin thinking about things related to what you have seen on television). If the bed is reserved for sleep alone, then climbing into bed will be a strong cue for you to fall asleep.
2. **Lie down in bed intending to go to sleep *only when you are very sleepy*.** Don't let the clock dictate when you go to bed. By staying up until you have a strong urge to sleep, you will be more likely to fall asleep quickly, reinforcing the association between bed and sleep. If you go to bed when you are not sleepy, you might toss and turn, begin to think and get mentally and physically aroused. That would only reinforce the old habit patterns we are trying to eliminate. By establishing a fixed time for getting up and allowing your bedtime to vary, your body can determine how much sleep you need to function well. Your body will let you know this by getting sleepy when it is time for you to go to bed.
3. **Get out of bed if you do not initially fall asleep within 15–20 minutes, and go to another room to do a relaxing activity (e.g., reading or watching TV in a dimly lit room). Go back to bed only when you feel extremely sleepy again. If you do not fall asleep within 20 minutes upon returning to bed, repeat this instruction as many times as needed.** Although the idea of getting out of bed to promote better sleep might seem counter-intuitive or strange, the reason for doing this is to strengthen the association of the bed and bedroom with sleep. By getting out of bed when you have not fallen asleep after 15–20 minutes, you

can promote this association. (Clock watching for this rule is not recommended. Get out of bed when you *feel* it has been about 15 to 20 minutes.)

4. **If you wake up during the night and do not fall back to sleep within 15–20 minutes, follow rule # 3 again.** New habits come only with repeated practice. When first beginning this treatment, it is common to have to get up many times each night before falling asleep.
5. **Use your alarm to leave bed at the *same time every morning* regardless of the amount of sleep obtained.** This will help your body acquire a constant sleep rhythm. By varying the time you get up you are shifting your rhythm each day so that it is not in stable harmony with clock time.
6. **Avoid napping.** Naps meet some of your sleep need and make it less likely that you will fall asleep quickly. By not napping, you also help to ensure that any sleep deprivation you feel from last night will increase your likelihood of falling asleep quickly tonight. If you must nap, do not nap past 3 p.m. Napping throws your body rhythm off schedule and makes it more difficult for you to sleep at night.