

Bright Light Therapy

For people with a delayed circadian sleep–wake phase, it can be really difficult to go to sleep at bedtime. It can be just as hard to wake up in the morning in time for school or work. Light in the morning is one of the best ways to make sure that the circadian rhythm or internal clock is set to the correct time. Bright light therapy can help match your circadian rhythm to your school or work schedule. Here is how it works:

1. **First, you need to wake up at about the same time every morning** (even on weekends!). For you this wake-up time should be _____.
2. **Next, you need to have about the same bedtime every night.** This needs to be late enough that you can go to sleep in 30 minutes or less. It also needs to be early enough so that you get enough sleep at night. Your bedtime should be _____.
3. **Every morning (7 days a week) when you wake up, you should use your bright light therapy device** for about 30 minutes. It is important that you carefully follow the instructions that come with your device to prevent any eye injuries.
4. **Remember that the time you use the light is very important.** If you oversleep by more than 30 minutes in the morning or forget to use the light device, skip it for that day. Then start using your bright light therapy again the next day.
5. **Once you are going to sleep easily and quickly, you should begin to move your bedtime and wake-up time earlier by 15 minutes every 2 to 5 days** (or however long it takes you to start going to sleep quickly at the new time).

Following the schedule and using bright light therapy every single day will make a huge difference to both your sleep and how you feel during the day! With regular use, bright light therapy should help you feel more awake in the morning. This can help you “get going” faster and do better in the morning at school or work. You should also start to feel sleepier closer to your new bedtime, making it easier to go to sleep faster. This will allow you to slowly move your bedtime earlier. In turn, you should get more sleep at night and still wake up in time for school or work in the morning.
