

Chronotherapy

For people with a delayed circadian sleep–wake phase, it can be impossible to fall asleep at bedtime and equally difficult to wake up in the morning early enough for school or work. As you know, if you try to move your bedtime earlier, it can be hard to fall asleep, but if you go to bed later than you usually do, it is easier to fall asleep. This is because all humans have a circadian rhythm that is a little bit longer than 24 hours, unlike our clocks, which run on a strict 24-hour day. By taking advantage of this fact, we can move your bedtime and wake-up time later by a few hours each day. After about a week, you will be at the target bedtime and wake-up time that will enable you to get enough sleep but still wake up in time to go to school or work. The following provides guidance on how to use chronotherapy.

- Based on your sleep diary and report, you have been falling asleep most nights around _____. To ensure that you get enough sleep, this would mean that you should be waking up at _____.
- For the next _____ days, you should go to bed at _____ and wake up at _____.
- Then, you should go to bed and wake up 3 hours later each day until you get to your desired bedtime of _____ and wake-up time of _____.

Your sleep schedule should look like this.

	Bedtime	Wake-up time
Day 1		
Day 2		
Day 3		
Day 4		
Day 5		
Day 6		
Day 7		

Chronotherapy can work very quickly to move your bedtime and wake-up time to where they should be to help you wake up in time for school or work and still feel rested. Because of your delayed internal clock, it is really easy to go to bed later each night. This is good for chronotherapy but can be really bad if you are not consistent with following this schedule! Thus it is critical that you go to bed and wake up every day at the set times, and once you reach your target bedtime and wake time, consistency is key. Even staying up late one night and sleeping in the following morning can be enough to undo the changes you have made to your sleep schedule.
