Bed is for sleep

Six rules that rebuild the link between bed and sleep.

After many nights of lying awake, your brain links bed with being alert and frustrated. These rules break that link and rebuild the connection between bed and sleep. They are simple, and they work, though the first week or two can be tiring.

The rules

1. **Go to bed only when you are sleepy.** Not just tired: eyes heavy, head nodding. If that is later than usual, so be it.
2. **Use the bed only for sleep and sex.** No phone, TV, work, eating or worrying in bed.
3. **If you are awake for what feels like 15 to 20 minutes, get up.** Go to another room. Do something quiet and dull in low light. Do not look at the clock.
4. **Go back to bed only when sleepy again.** Repeat as often as you need to.
5. **Get up at the same time every morning**, however the night went. Weekends too.
6. **Do not nap.**

Make it easier

- Set up a "night spot" in advance: a chair, a blanket, a lamp, a book that is not too gripping.
- In winter, leave a dressing gown ready so getting up is less grim.
- Tell anyone you live with what you are doing and why.

What to expect

- You may get less sleep for the first few nights. That builds sleep pressure, which is what makes the method work.
- Getting up feels like the wrong thing to do. It is the most important rule.
- Most people notice they are falling asleep faster within one to three weeks.

> **Take care**
> You may be sleepier than usual at first. Be careful with driving and anything that needs full alertness.

My getting-up time, every day

Where I will go and what I will do if I am awake

These instructions are known as stimulus control, developed by Richard Bootzin.

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