



# The Link Between Anxiety & Insomnia

**Wendy Fisher, Retirement-Online**

# The Link Between Anxiety & Insomnia

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.** No part of this report may be modified or altered in any form whatsoever, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any informational storage or retrieval system without express written, dated and signed permission from the author.

**AFFILIATE DISCLAIMER.** The short, direct, non-legal version is this: Some of the links in this report may be affiliate links which means that I earn money if you choose to buy from that vendor at some point in the near future. I do not choose which products and services to promote based upon which pay me the most, I choose based upon my decision of which I would recommend to a dear friend. You will never pay more for an item by clicking through my affiliate link, and, in fact, may pay less since I negotiate special offers for my readers that are not available elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

**DISCLAIMER AND/OR LEGAL NOTICES:** The information presented herein represents the view of the author as of the date of publication. Because of the rate with which conditions change, the author reserves the right to alter and update his opinion based on the new conditions. The report is for informational purposes only. While every attempt has been made to verify the information provided in this report, neither the author nor his affiliates/partners assume any responsibility for errors, inaccuracies or omissions. Any slights of people or organizations are unintentional. If advice concerning legal or related matters is needed, the services of a fully qualified professional should be sought. This report is not intended for use as a source of legal or accounting advice. You should be aware of any laws which govern business transactions or other business practices in your country and state. Any reference to any person or business whether living or dead is purely coincidental.

Copyright [Retirement-Online.com](http://Retirement-Online.com) 2018

# Table Of Contents

Introduction 4

So why do anxiety and insomnia often co-exist in individuals? 5

Insomnia Causes Anxiety 5

Anxiety Causes Insomnia 5

Has Your Insomnia Become a Habit? 7

Safe Sleep for Older Adults 8

Tips to Help You Fall Asleep 9

Set up your bedroom for rest and relaxation 9

Remove technology devices from the bedroom 9

Blue Light from Technology 10

Counting Sheep 10

Relax Your Body 10

Meditation Audios 10

Use your bedroom only for sleeping 11

Consider visiting your doctor 11

Conclusion 12

For More Information About Better Sleep 13



## Introduction

If you have difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or wake up very early in the morning, you may be suffering from insomnia.

It is not enough to close your eyes, and simply count sheep and hope you will enter the world of sleep. Insomnia is the most common sleep problem in adults age 60 and older. People with this condition have trouble falling asleep and staying asleep. Insomnia can last for days, months, and even years.

However, when it starts happening frequently and becomes long term, it can really cause problems in your day to day functioning.

- You may feel sleepy putting you and others at increased risk of injury if you drive a vehicle or operate machinery.
- You may also have trouble concentrating and experience problems with your memory.
- Little stressors can feel like huge stressors, and your coping skills deteriorate. As a result, your relationships with your family and friends will suffer as well.

To complicate matters, people with insomnia often also have anxiety or an anxiety disorder. Further complicating things, if you have both anxiety and depression, your insomnia is often worse.

## **So why do anxiety and insomnia often co-exist in individuals?**

There are two ways to look at this. Insomnia can cause the anxiety, OR anxiety can cause the insomnia.

### **Insomnia Causes Anxiety**

First, let's discuss how insomnia can cause the anxiety. If you are having trouble sleeping, this may lead to anxiety about a number of different things.

You might start worrying about how you will function the next day on so little sleep, and how you will ever make it through the entire day.

As you think about this and watch the numbers on the clock slowly advance, you become more anxious, making it even more difficult to fall asleep.

### **Anxiety Causes Insomnia**

On the other hand, when your anxiety is causing the insomnia, your anxiety makes it difficult to shut off thoughts in your head. You've likely been there — when your mind is running circles around every single negative it can find.

You may be feeling worried or fearful about perceived or real issues. Yes, sometimes our "issues" are fears. They aren't even real... they are invented by past experiences and your subconscious mind is trying to protect you.

In someone prone to anxiety, this may translate into anxious thoughts. You worry about your family (even when the situation is out of your control), or your health

(when you should be affirming good health instead). All the worries in the world do you no good.

Because anxiety and insomnia are so prevalent in society today, it is a topic worthy of discussion on its own.

## Has Your Insomnia Become a Habit?

Often, being unable to sleep becomes a habit. Some seniors worry about not sleeping even before they get into bed. This may make it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep.

Some older adults who have trouble sleeping may use over-the-counter sleep aids. Others may use prescription medicines to help them sleep. These medicines may help when used for a short time. But remember, medicines aren't a cure for insomnia.

Developing healthy habits at bedtime may help you get a good night's sleep.

In many cases, there is a component of anxiety that coexists with the insomnia. That is why it is important to try to get to the root cause of the insomnia whenever possible. In some cases, there is no particular reason for the insomnia, however.

## Safe Sleep for Older Adults

Try to set up a safe and restful place to sleep. Remove small worries from your mind about sleep itself. Make sure you have smoke alarms on each floor of your home. Before going to bed, lock all windows and doors that lead outside. Other ideas for a safe night's sleep are:

- Keep a telephone with emergency phone numbers by your bed.
- Have a lamp within reach that is easy to turn on.
- Put a glass of water next to the bed in case you wake up thirsty.
- Remove area rugs so you won't trip if you get out of bed during the night.



## **Tips to Help You Fall Asleep**

You may have heard about some tricks to help you fall asleep. Every little change could make a big improvement to your sleep and life!

### **Set up your bedroom for rest and relaxation**

This means sleeping in a room that is not overly hot. It is recommended that you keep the room between 68 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit (20 – 21 degrees Celsius).

Have drapes in place to keep the room dark during sleeping, but you can have a small unobtrusive nightlight (with a red lightbulb) in a corner of the room, if necessary to lessen anxiety.

If your clock has bright numbers, turn it away so you don't continually watch it's slow movement.

### **Remove technology devices from the bedroom**

Remove any temptation to check the time, text messages, emails, or social media for the latest updates. This can increase anxiety, but initially, it may cause more anxiety due to the fear of not being accessible by others and no longer "being in the loop" at all times.

If this is you, stop it. We've lived our lives without technology until recent years, you can leave it alone for the benefit of good sleep, right?

## **Blue Light from Technology**

The blue light emitted from these devices suppresses melatonin – the sleep hormone – production, thereby delaying sleep further.

## **Counting Sheep**

You don't really have to count sheep—you could try counting slowly to 100. I sometimes count backwards by 3s or 4s so that I have to mentally think... and not about the silly worries but simple math.

Some people find that playing mental games makes them sleepy. For example, tell yourself it is 5 minutes before you have to get up, and you're just trying to get a little bit more sleep.

## **Relax Your Body**

Some people find that relaxing their bodies puts them to sleep. One way to do this is to imagine your toes are completely relaxed, then your feet, and then your ankles are completely relaxed. Work your way up the rest of your body, section by section. You may drift off to sleep before getting to the top of your head.

## **Meditation Audios**

Instead of trying to relax my body using my mind, I prefer using an app on my phone. Some audios offer the same body relaxation techniques, but they walk me through it verbally. This works better for me to stay focused. I use [\*\*Insight Timer\*\*](#). It's Free! There are millions of different audios, some you will love, others you will not, some short and some longer. You simply take a few minutes to find one that feels right for you. You can search for topics: anxiety, sleep, energy, transition, whatever you can think of, I bet it's out there!

## **Use your bedroom only for sleeping**

After turning off the light, give yourself about 20 minutes to fall asleep. If you're still awake and not drowsy, get out of bed. When you feel sleepy, go back to bed.

I watch TV in bed so that doesn't work for me, and that is why there are options to fit your own sleep style!

## **Consider visiting your doctor**

If you feel tired and unable to do your activities for more than 2 or 3 weeks, you may have a sleep problem. Talk with your doctor about changes you can make to get a better night's sleep.

Sometimes, more help is needed. Medications may be prescribed... my 90-year old mother has anxiety at night. One xanax calms her in 15-20 minutes and she can sleep. She doesn't care to take additional meds, but she started night panic attacks. Every time, she insisted she was having a heart attack, which has been ruled out. As you might know, this REALLY scared her! So sometimes, simple meds do the trick and prevent undue stress. The physician can also make a referral to a therapist or psychologist trained in this.

A naturopathic doctor may also be able to provide natural suggestions for improving sleep too.

In any case, it is always important for the healthcare professional to try to determine if there is a physical or psychological cause to the insomnia.

## Conclusion

Insomnia is a problem for adults, children, and teens. Anxiety often co-exists in individuals with insomnia, and it becomes important to identify the source of the anxiety if insomnia is to be treated successfully. There are many methods that can be used to help a child with insomnia, which have been outlined above.

**Want to Join my [Sleep Sweet Sleep Workshop](#)?**  
**It's an e-workshop to help retirees find the sleep they need... for health, for life!**

**Click to join!**

## **For More Information About Better Sleep**

American Sleep Apnea Association  
1-888-293-3650 (toll-free)  
[asaa@sleepapnea.org](mailto:asaa@sleepapnea.org)  
[www.sleepapnea.org](http://www.sleepapnea.org)

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute  
1-301-592-8573  
[nhlbiinfo@nhlbi.nih.gov](mailto:nhlbiinfo@nhlbi.nih.gov)  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

National Sleep Foundation  
1-703-243-1697  
[nsf@sleepfoundation.org](mailto:nsf@sleepfoundation.org)  
[www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)

Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation  
1-512-366-9109  
[info@rls.org](mailto:info@rls.org)  
[www.rls.org](http://www.rls.org)