

SLEEP AIDS

Cedar Park, TX – June 9, 2009

This morning, as my 3 year old son was gleefully waking me up at the crack of dawn, I was reminded of how important sleep is! In the United States, sleep deprivation is a major problem for people of all ages (not just for parents of toddlers). According to [SleepMed, Inc.](#) "over 70 million Americans suffer from disorders of sleep and wakefulness." They also report that "20-40% of all adults have insomnia during the course of any year."

So, the question is, are there any natural sleep aids available for people in need of some extra zzzs? First of all, if you have chronic insomnia it is best to have a physician rule out things like sleep apnea (where you actually stop breathing for a short time), lung and heart disease, and possibly diabetes. If everything checks out fine, then there are certain herbs and relaxation techniques that have helped people in the past.

One of the most commonly used sleep promoters is valerian root. Studied by Hippocrates, the father of medicine, valerian root has been shown to produce a state of calm, drowsiness, and tranquility. Obviously, this is not something to take right before a road trip, but it may be just the ticket when it comes to falling asleep. As a word of caution, it is not recommended that you take valerian root (or any other sleep medicine) for long periods of time, due to potential physical or mental dependency.

Another effective (non-medicine) sleep aid is meditation. In many cases, people have trouble falling asleep because their brain is on overdrive with dozens of thoughts, to-do lists, and stressful upcoming life events. An easy way to dampen the inner "noise" is to completely focus on something peaceful and pleasant. Whether you concentrate on the lapping waves of the ocean, or the cool breeze of a mountain top, meditation will naturally relax your mind and allow sleep to gently whisk you away.

Finally, a simple and effective method that has worked extraordinarily well for me in the past, is a twist on the "counting sheep" technique. Lightly place the fingertips of one hand on your opposite wrist and start taking your pulse. The simple act of focusing on the rhythmic beat of your heart will quickly lull you into a peaceful trance, and before long you'll be snoring the night away!

[Cedar Park Chiropractor](#), Dr. Thomas Bynes has over 11 years of clinical experience in providing gentle Chiropractic care, Trigger Point muscle pain relief, [nutritional counseling](#), dieting advice, and exercise training. In 2009, [Dr. Bynes](#) published the detailed weight loss and wellness book "[Sinner to Thinner](#)," a one-stop resource for healthy living, available at [Amazon.com](#).