

Relax & Beat Insomnia

by Vita Kolodny, RN

People are literally losing sleep over the growing problem of insomnia.

Insomnia or any sleep problem is a problem 24/7. Insomnia can include not being able to fall asleep, stay asleep, having interrupted sleep or having sleep of very poor quality.

Symptoms of poor sleep include cycles of daytime mood swings, decreased daytime alertness and decrease in productivity. This in turn creates a vicious cycle of stress and more insomnia. Add to that a physical or mental illness, medication, foods that irritate the system or other irritants like air and noise pollution and you've got a big problem.

Let's face it; many of us are overworked, required to multitask and we feel stressed during the day. Daytime stress carries over into our ability to fall asleep at night. The key is to mitigate the effects of daytime stress so sleep is restful and comes easily.

One highly effective solution for the sleep deprived among us is simple, practical and easy to do. It's the trademarked *Sounder Sleep System* and it takes advantage of our natural breathing rhythm in combination with small, gentle movements called *mini moves*. The Sounder Sleep System is based on the teachings of



The term cat nap comes from the notion that a cat can fall asleep in a short time just about anywhere.

Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais, founder of The Feldenkrais Method of movement education.

Daytime mini moves help reduce the effects of daytime stress, while movements done in bed at night help lull you into restful sleep or help you return to sleep after awakening in the night. These easy and gentle movement and breathing techniques are done slowly and take very little time. People who practice daytime mini moves two to three times a day, for as little as five consecutive minutes, have reported positive effects on their ability to sleep.

As director of the Feldenkrais Centre, Vancouver, I teach Sounder Sleep classes where participants learn daytime mini moves and night time movements. Can you imagine a class where you bring your own pillow and blanket, and homework consists of lying in bed?

In addition to the movement sequences the classes also include discussions about several important lifestyle

factors to establish and maintain a regular waking/sleep rhythm. These include:

- Exercising as early in the day as possible; avoiding exercise close to bedtime.
- Getting exposure to daytime natural light or sunlight to activate the melatonin cycle.
- Reducing environmental light in the evening to begin the production of melatonin.
- Sleeping in a darkened room or wearing eye shades.
- Maintaining a regular bedtime schedule and routine (one that does not include doing last minute emails!).

Vita Kolodny is director of the Feldenkrais Centre, Vancouver. For more information on the Sounder Sleep System and Feldenkrais call Vita at 604-263-1321 or visit the website at www.feldenkraisvancouver.com.

