

Depression and Night Owls

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Many so called 'night owls' have a natural physiology which predisposes them to a later sleep and wake time. Left to their preferred schedule, these individuals are typically healthy and productive. But most night owls are required to comply with a more 'early bird' waking schedule because of work and other commitments.

This may not seem to be a big deal, but for night owls, continually having to follow a schedule that is not physiologically appropriate for them, may cause them to become 'desynchronized' and develop a form of insomnia. Studies have shown that it is common for a low-grade depression to accompany this insomnia. Many night owls in this circumstance may have even been prescribed anti-depressants but find that the depression is not always relieved.

If you are a night owl, consider the following tips to help improve the quality of your sleep:

Accept that your preferred sleeping hours are a natural physiological characteristic like the color of your hair or eyes.

Decide if you are better served by following your natural schedule or by managing your sleep/wake schedule so that you can comply with a more 'early bird' schedule. Each of these has consequences for your life, work and health, so you will need to decide which consequences are more acceptable or necessary.

One option is to follow an early morning schedule on workdays and sleep later on the weekends to allow for some 'catch-up' sleep time. Without this catch-up time on the weekend, you may not be able to get through the week.

Try to get a schedule accommodation to allow you to start work no earlier than 9 a.m. Offer to work later in the day to make up for the later start time.

Choose a bedtime that is appropriate for a night owl. Many night owls try to go to bed early and find that they are in bed for hours before they actually fall asleep.

Keep a consistent bedtime that is appropriate for night owl physiology.

If you wish to advance your sleep/wake schedule, consult with your physician about light therapy or melatonin as possible treatments.

Learn more at:

Night Owl Network

www.nightowl.net

Night Owl Network is dedicated to helping night owls live comfortably in an early bird world.

Associated Sleep Services

www.associatedsleepservices.com

Associated Sleep Services is a Sleep Disorder Screening center that is using advances in technology to help provide first-line diagnostics to assist physician in confirming a diagnosis of a sleep disorder.