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## NH Employee Assistance Program

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*Healthy people ask for help.*

**603.271.4336**

### **Turn the clock around.**

The phrase is often heard when Paula Booth, Director of the State of NH Employee Assistance Program, is speaking to state employees about self-care. When you get tired of staring at the ceiling or switching sleep positions, it's tempting to take a peek at the time. **Resist the urge to check the clock!** Sleep experts agree that watching the minutes pass may initiate a worry cycle, keeping your brain more alert and causing stress. It makes getting back to sleep that much harder. If you've got a clock on your night table, turn it around... and it's also helpful to make sure that your phone isn't anywhere nearby.

**EAP has identified some tips to help you sleep, even when stress has caused sleep to be elusive!**



### **Watch your Eats before Hitting the Sheets**

- Avoid drinking large amounts later in the day. A full bladder can stop you from falling or staying asleep.
- Try to reduce tobacco or caffeine later in the evening.
- Pour yourself a warm glass of milk to help you sleep. Research varies on the effectiveness of warm milk, but if it works for you – go for it!
- Try to avoid heavy meals before bedtime because it may interfere with sleep.
- Avoid prolonged use of sedatives and alcohol.

### **Body Heating and Sleep**

Interestingly, body-heating can have a very different effect than a warm room during sleep. Some studies suggest that soaking in hot water (such as a hot tub or bath) before retiring to bed may ease the transition into a deeper sleep. This may be due to a temperature shift (core body temperature drops after leaving the tub) which may signal to the body that it's time to sleep. The sleep improvement may also be related to the water's relaxing properties, which may also have sleep-promoting effects.

A pre-bedtime bath may set the mood for children and adults alike. Why not try soaking in hot water to ease your journey to sleep?

### **Get on a schedule.**

Catching up on sleep over the weekend may feel great on Saturday and Sunday, but doing so might feel terrible on Monday morning. Rather than trying to catch some extra Zzzs over the weekend, go to bed at around the same time each night and wake up at around the same time each morning. If possible, go to bed a bit earlier on weekdays, so you don't feel like you're running behind on sleep. Also, if you're a napper, limit your naps to one 30-minute nap a day; a nap any longer may cause you trouble falling asleep later that night.