[A Quick Guide to Addiction Recovery and Sleep](https://www.originsrecovery.com/addiction-recovery-sleep/)

Most who have dealt with a substance use disorder (SUD) or addiction have experienced sleep issues at some point, either while in active addiction or during recovery. Even when they aren’t your system anymore, drugs and alcohol can have a major impact on your body.

Facts About Addiction, Recovery and Sleep

Sleep problems are common in recovery. Here are the facts:

* Among patients admitted for alcoholism treatment, rates of insomnia range from 36 percent to 72 percent
* Polysomnographic analyses found that some sleep abnormalities can persist for 1 to 3 years after cessation of alcohol or drug consumption
* Sleep disorders are between 5 to 10 times higher in people with substance use disorders, compared with the general population

If you’re headed to treatment, be sure to discuss these problems with your on-site doctor as well as counselor. You don’t have to battle it alone.

Healthcare providers should:

* Screen for insomnia among people in recovery
* Include questions about sleep during the routine assessment
* Rule out other causes of nighttime problems (e.g., stress, medications)
* Educate patients about sleep hygiene
* Make referrals to specialists, if necessary
* Consider risk factors before prescribing medications to treat insomnia
* Monitor patients using medications for signs of abuse

Sleep Medications and Addiction – A Deadly Combination

Experts recommend against the use of medications to treat sleep disorders for people in recovery. Often, these sedating drugs carry a risk for addiction. According to the Surgeon General’s Report on Addiction, 1.5 million persons aged 12 or older have misused sedatives in the past year. 6.1 million persons have misused tranquilizers in the past year.

Prescription medications for sleep with known abuse potential include:

* Ambien (zolpidem)
* Sonata (zaleplon)
* Lunesta (eszopiclone)
* Benzodiazepines (Valium, Xanax, etc.)

These medications should be avoided by people with histories of SUDs. They can also cause residual daytime sedation, cognitive impairment, motor incoordination, and rebound insomnia.

Short-term symptoms of use:

* Drowsiness
* Slurred speech
* Poor concentration
* Clammy skin
* Impaired judgment
* Lowered blood pressure
* Slowed breathing
* Coma, and death

If you’re still using drugs, including legal substances such as alcohol, be very careful when addressing them on your own. Many people with addiction are often unwilling to discuss substance use with a doctor and may also be unaware of the consequences of mixing drugs. Some interactions can be deadly, leading to overdose which is now one of the leading causes of death in the United States.

Healing The Brain

During drug and alcohol withdrawal, restorative sleep is necessary for the brain to heal. Cues that someone in recovery may need sleep restoration include:

* Post-Acute Withdrawal Syndrome
* Fear and anxiety which can manifest as night terrors
* Overreliance on medication
* Physical or emotional pain
* Irritability
* Lack of concentration or focus
* Lowered immune system
* Obsessive thinking

Since the addition of the holistic sleep program at Origins on South Padre Island, 40% of clients stopped needing medications for insomnia. There are plenty of holistic ways to fight insomnia. As someone battling addiction, learning how to go to bed naturally is a critical component of permanent recovery.

Natural ways to fight insomnia include:

* Progressive muscle relaxation
* Biofeedback
* CBT techniques
* Regular exercise
* Positive airway pressure machines to help with obstructive sleep apnea