

INSOMNIA AFTER LOSS

By: Linda Findlay



It can be difficult to sleep, and sleep well, when you're grieving. Try to not be too frustrated with yourself if it's happening. Give yourself grace and patience to get through this difficult time. Consider trying some of these tips to see whether they help you get better rest and improve your overall sleep:

- **Create a routine:** You may not be going through life with the same schedule while you're grieving. But getting back into a predictable pattern of eating, sleeping, and activity can help when it comes to rest.
- **Set a bedtime:** Part of your new routine can involve setting a predictable bedtime (and wake time) so your body can get back into the habit of feeling tired around the same time each day.
- **Limit distractions:** Remove things from your bedroom space that distract you from sleeping. This may include a television or smartphone. The blue light from screens can sometimes disrupt your sleep.
- **Optimize your bedroom for sleeping:** Use blackout curtains to make the room dark and a white noise machine to drown out outside noises. Good ventilation is also important for good sleep.
- **Exercise:** Working out may be the last thing on your mind these days. Still, walking or getting in other movement each day may help you more easily fall asleep at night. Just make sure not to exercise immediately before bed.
- **Avoid large meals, alcohol, and caffeine close to bedtime:** Avoid large meals before going to bed. Consuming alcohol and caffeine soon before bed may also make it harder to sleep. A cup of tea might help you get to sleep. Just keep in mind it could also make you get up to use the bathroom in the middle of the night.

It may feel overwhelming to make all these changes at once. Try starting with one and then working your way up to more with time.

You may find out that doing one thing, like creating a routine, lends itself to others, like regular exercise. Stick with it as much as possible. Over time, you may find that you are sleeping better.

If not, get in touch with a doctor for additional advice and medical care. For example, a doctor may suggest cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or prescribe medications to help you sleep in the short term.