



Delayed Sleep Phase Disorder

Your internal clock tells you when to sleep and when to wake up. By design, you get sleepy a few hours after it gets dark and wake up when the sun rises. If you have delayed sleep phase disorder you may refer to yourself as a night owl. You have a slow internal clock, and don't get sleepy until 3 or 4 am, because your internal clock thinks it's only 10 or 11 pm. You may stay in bed until noon or later.

This sleep schedule becomes a problem when you are forced to get up much earlier than your body wants to for work or school. You may find it very difficult to get up at normal times and might go to great lengths to make sure you do get up at the right time. You may ask friends or family members to drag you out of bed and into a cold shower. You might use multiple, loud alarm clocks. You may try to go to bed at the "proper" time, but find that you cannot fall asleep until the early morning hours.

On the weekends, you may revert to your night owl schedule, falling asleep at 4 am and sleeping soundly until 1 or 2 pm. When you get up you feel fully awake, but then on Sunday night, your struggle begins again as you attempt to sleep at a time that allows you to get up for work or school on Monday.

Treatment for this disorder can be difficult because it requires significant effort and motivation on your part. The goal of treatment is to retrain your internal clock to a more regular schedule and to shift your internal clock to the desired sleep times. One way is to get up 15 minutes earlier each day until you are waking up at the desired time. Light therapy can also help shift your internal clock. This involves sitting 12 to 36 inches away from a light box that puts out 10,000 lux for 30 minutes immediately after you wake up. It is not necessary to look directly at the light, but it should be in your field of vision. While the light is on, do other activities like eat breakfast, put on makeup, read, do homework, use the computer, or watch TV. You should use the light every morning for at least a month. A light box can be obtained without a prescription from a number of companies, such as [Northern Light Technologies](#), [Philips](#), [The Sun Box Company](#) or [Enviromed](#).

It might also be helpful to take three to six mg of Melatonin every night, about two to three hours before your desired bedtime. Melatonin does not require a prescription and should be available at most pharmacies.

Once your sleep schedule is occurring at the desired times, it is important to stick to it seven days a week for at least six months. Your internal clock will quickly shift and delayed sleep phase disorder is likely to reoccur if you don't stick to your new schedule.

Sleep Medicine Center of Kansas is an American Academy of Sleep Medicine Accredited Sleep Center

www.sleepmedicinecenterofkansas.com

PHONE | 316-651-2250 **TOLL-FREE** | 800-876-5111

EAST WICHITA | 818 N Carriage Parkway | Wichita, KS 67208

NORTHEAST WICHITA | Kansas Heart Office Plaza | 9350 E 35th St N Suite 102 | Wichita, KS 67226

WEST WICHITA | 750 N Socora, Suite 100 | Wichita, KS 67212

NEWTON | 720 Medical Center Dr | Newton, KS 67114

PRATT | 124 Commodore, Suite B | Pratt, KS 67124