

# Wake Therapy for Depression

A night of sleep deprivation has long been known to quickly treat depression. The problem is that the benefits quickly wear off. In 2014 researchers in Europe discovered a way to pair sleep deprivation with light-box therapy to bring about a more lasting recovery. This method can be used to speed your response to light therapy and improve your overall chance of full recovery. It works by doing a hard reset on the biological clock, which driven by sleep and light/darkness and is often disrupted during mood disorders.

## 1) Week 1: Sleep deprivation every other night

During this week you will stay up the entire night (and stay awake the following day), on alternate nights, as shown in the chart below. You'll sit under the lightbox very early in the morning (4am) on the nights that you stay up. Otherwise, keep normal background lights on during those nights of sleep deprivation. Try to sleep in total darkness on the following nights when you are allowed to sleep, and avoid total darkness during the daytime.

Day	Morning	Daytime	Nighttime
1	Lightbox at 8am for 30 minutes*	Stay awake	Stay awake entire night
2	Lightbox at 4am for 30 minutes	Stay awake	Sleep at 8pm
3	Lightbox at 8am for 30 minutes*	Stay awake	Stay awake entire night
4	Lightbox at 4am for 30 minutes	Stay awake	Sleep at 8pm
5	Lightbox at 8am for 30 minutes*	Stay awake	Stay awake entire night
6	Lightbox at 4am for 30 minutes	Stay awake	Sleep at 8pm
7	Lightbox at AutoMEQ time	Stay awake	Sleep at your normal time

\*Or upon awakening

## Tips on Staying Awake

- Get a friend or relative to assist. Conversation helps a lot.
- Watch comedies or action films, but don't sit too long.
- Walk or stretch for 10-20 minute chunks.
- Change tasks every 20-30 minutes.
- Find something engaging, a "page turner" that makes you want to do more of it.
- Drink lots of water.
- Avoid sugar crashes – eat protein.
- If you need caffeine, use small amounts (¼ cup of coffee every 1-2 hours).
- Play video games.

## 2) Week 2 and beyond

After the first week, go to sleep at your regular bedtime and use the lightbox in the morning each day. You can find out the optimal time to start the lightbox using the MEQ test: [moodtreatmentcenter.com/automeqtest.pdf](http://moodtreatmentcenter.com/automeqtest.pdf)

*Warning:* This method may cause mania in people with bipolar disorder. The risk for mania is higher if you have had a recent mania in the past 6 months. You should call us and stop the lightbox and the sleep deprivation if signs of mania occur (these include agitation, irritability, impulsivity, racing thoughts, hyperactivity, talking fast).