

# **BLIS™ For Insomniacs**

**Breakthrough New Techniques To Beat  
Insomnia & Turn On Your Sleep Switch**

**by Allan Baker**  
Aviation Psychologist



**A simple How-To-Get-To-Sleep guide for anyone who  
suffers from lack of sleep, and wants to achieve bliss.**

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Written by: Allan Baker

Edited By: Allan Udy

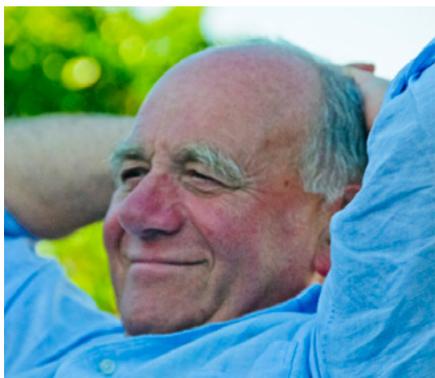
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Allan Baker is an aviation psychologist and current holder of the [Jim Collins Memorial Award](#) for Outstanding Contributions to Aviation Safety.

He was presented with this award in 2017 for his significant contribution to the development of the New Zealand Air Line Pilots Association (NZALPA) Peer Assistance Program, and in particular his furthering of a better industry understanding in the specialist area of mental health.

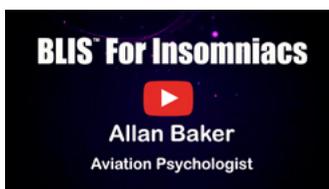
*Many things—such as loving, going to sleep, or behaving unaffectedly—are done worst when we try hardest to do them.*

*C. S. Lewis, 1954*

Many people suffer from either not enough sleep, or broken sleep, and they're often lying awake at night desperately trying to get (back) to sleep. This book provides details on my newly developed BLIS™ Technique for getting to sleep, and describes the scientific literature and established principles that have helped shape the development of this new and exciting technique.

I hope that the information provided herein will help you learn how to turn your Sleep Switch on, and to gain and enjoy many additional hours of BLISfull sleep.

— Allan Baker



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# Chapter 1: Introduction

*Well, I dreamed I saw the silver  
Space ships flying  
In the yellow haze of the sun,  
There were children crying  
And colors flying  
All around the chosen ones.  
All in a dream, all in a dream*

*Neil Young — After the Gold Rush*

## The Business Of Sleep

Sleep is big business, worth some \$30bn globally and growing consistently by 8% a year, say consultants McKinsey.

Deluxe mattress makers, herbal remedy concoctors, manufacturers of electronic sleep trackers, writers of self-help books, all are cashing in on our seeming inability to close our eyes and fall effortlessly into the embrace of Hypnos.

Kate Edgley,  
*Guardian* 16 Dec 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/dec/16/how-i-finally-learned-to-sleep-insomnia>

## Links In this Book

*Links and web URLs in this book, such as the one above, are linked to the internet. Click on the link address to open your web browser directly to that specific page (your device must be connected to the internet) for more information.*

I'm a psychologist who also trained as a Royal New Zealand Air Force pilot. That experience has led me to a specialization in working with airline pilots, where I help them with many issues that affect their performance and well-being. I help them pass their check flights and simulator training sessions; I help with depression and anxiety issues; I provide strategies to enable them to cope with their difficult work-life balance (caused by the fact they work around the world, and around the clock), and I provide help coping with disturbance to their sleep patterns brought on by massive and frequent changes to their sleep/wake cycles.

Because you're interested in improving your own sleep and mitigating the problems that come from your own sleep issues, I think you can probably see why my experience is helpful. I deal with pilots whose ability to get good quality sleep is absolutely fundamental to their ability to both do their job and to stay in peak physical condition. Just like many of my airline clients, perhaps you feel a similar need to get good quality sleep, and are frustrated because you feel you're failing yourself?

Airline pilots are in an occupation that is probably one of the most sleep disturbed, yet most sleep critical. If you need to be convinced of this all you need to do is take a look at the world's current air traffic as revealed on any flight tracking system, such as



*A partial screenshot from Flight-Radar24, showing the number of flights over the eastern USA at 11:30PM, during the COVID-19 Crisis in April 2020 (when flight numbers were unusually low).*

FlightRadar24 ([www.flightradar24.com](http://www.flightradar24.com)). There are literally thousands of aircraft airborne at any one time, and in various time zones around the world where those flights are taking place in the middle of the night. These aircraft are all being flown by pilots who have trained to be at their best performance while the rest of us are sleeping. As I've been helping and treating these pilots, I've learned enough about sleep to convince me that modern treatment approaches to sleep quality and insomnia may be helpful, but they're not sufficient to overcome the massive and significant problems that many of us have in attaining good quality, restorative, and health giving sleep.

For those of us whose inability to sleep has become an almost unsolvable issue there is even a school of thought that suggests giving up trying to attain quality sleep, and instead casting lack of sleep as a virtue. Patricia Marx, a humourist and staff writer with The New Yorker, wrote in February 2020<sup>1</sup> :

*"When I got older, I liked being up at night because it seemed to me more productive to work when nobody was emailing, and by work I mean Netflix. Besides, I'd always thought, What's the big deal about being tired as long as your job doesn't involve flying a plane?"*

Well, my job does involve clients who fly planes. I'm very concerned that they operate at peak performance, and they can only do that if they get the sleep they need, when they need it. I've discovered a technique they use to help them do this, and I want to show you how it works, how to do it, and how it can benefit you too. I know Patricia was trying to make the best of a bad situation, but she also knew that being awake in the wee small hours is significantly related to a degraded immune system, inflammation increase, metabolic disturbances and heart disease. She did revise her position a little later in the article when she noted :

<sup>1</sup> Feb 3rd 2020: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/02/03>

## Insufficient Sleep = Premature Death

Yes, sleep is important. Last year a leaked government green paper stated that less than seven hours was associated with “increased risk of obesity, strokes, heart attacks, depression and anxiety”.

Researchers who analysed 25 years’ worth of sleep studies described the link between insufficient sleep and premature death as “unequivocal”, which is helpful to remember at 4:00AM when your face itches, your legs are simultaneously leaden and restless and that embarrassing incident in 2010 involving an acquaintance’s toaster plays on repeat in your whirring mind.

Emma Beddington

*The Guardian, 13 Feb 2020*

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/feb/13/desperate-for-sleep-insomnia-advice-keeping-me-awake>

*“Not to be a downer, but chronic sleep deprivation, which Amnesty International designates a form of torture, has been linked to diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, execution (the sleep-starved minister of North Korea is rumoured to have been shot after dozing in the presence of Kim Jong-Un), world disasters (the Challenger explosion<sup>2</sup>, the Three Mile Island Meltdown<sup>3</sup>) and non-disasters (the drop in the polls of Donald Trump, who is reported to get only three or four hours of Shut-eye a night).”*

The pilots I help all operate under health and safety rules that recognize that gruelling sleep and wake cycles can result in severe fatigue that affects their performance—being awake for 17 hours creates the same level of performance degradation as alcohol does, at the level of the legal limit for driving in many countries. However, rather than simply fatigue, it’s also the long term health implications of flying in the small hours, of crossing of multiple times zones on a regular basis, and the pattern of broken sleep cycles associated with long-haul flying, that’s leading to renewed interest in health and sleep science. As a pilot colleague commented to me

*“it’s not sufficient that I get the sleep I need for fatigue protection on these long trips. I have to consider what the sleep disturbance is doing to my long term well-being, and that worries me.”*

The essence of the problem with attaining good sleep and overcoming insomnia is that all the sleep help available to-date has focused on approaches that are restricted to just two skill sets and advice. For the most part, these have been helpful but not sufficient to solve the problem. They form two legs of a metaphorical sleep stool, but the problem is that all three legs are needed for a stool to do its job.

2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space\\_Shuttle\\_Challenger\\_disaster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Shuttle_Challenger_disaster)

3 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three\\_Mile\\_Island\\_accident](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Mile_Island_accident)

## Sleep Hygiene - The First Leg Of The Sleep Stool

The first leg of the stool, the Sleep Hygiene factors, focuses on arranging your physical environment and your daytime and night-time activities to be as conducive as possible to allow the onset of sleep, and then its ongoing maintenance. The effectiveness of Sleep Hygiene is vested in the fact that the brain requires a varied and somewhat complex chemical soup to perform and maintain its functions. The soup will vary depending on whether the brain is requiring alertness associated with wakefulness, or drowsiness associated with the onset of sleep, and will further vary depending on the type of sleep we need to have in order to wake rested and refreshed. I will deal with these hygiene factors in Chapter 3.

## CBT - The Second Leg Of The Sleep Stool

The second leg of the sleep stool comprises the mental factors that help us shift our attention from external to internal stimuli. Insomniacs in particular are very good at getting into destructive patterns of thinking, which are known to be counterproductive to inducing sleep.

### The Fundamental Importance Of Sleep

"Over the past three decades we have come to understand the fundamental importance of sleep," he says. "Mental and emotional state, metabolic function, all depend on sleep patterns. Chronically mis-timed sleep – people constantly fighting the clock over long periods – we know to be damaging. For example, there is a greater risk of cancer in airline aircrew crossing time zones, and in night shift workers."

Instability in the circadian rhythm, the 24-hour body cycle, is known to impair signalling in the immune system, making sleep-deprived people more vulnerable to illness.

This daily process is observable even in a single cell. Impaired judgement, anxiety, depression, hypertension, diabetes, all are associated with chronic sleep disorders. If you have had difficulty sleeping on three or more nights per week for at least three months and your difficulty sleeping is troubling you, you may be suffering from insomnia disorder.

"In a sense, sleep is the preferred state of the brain," argues Espie. "The brain does some of its most important work during sleep: repairing, regulating, laying down memory and managing growth. Sleep is a varied and productive time. Saying that you do not need sleep is like saying you do not need clean air, water and nutrition."

Professor Espie, *The Guardian*, 16 Dec 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/dec/16/how-i-finally-learned-to-sleep-insomnia>

## BLIS™ For Insomniacs



Developing The BLIS™  
Technique



The science of unscrewing these destructive, counterproductive patterns of thinking are usually contained in Cognitive Behavioural Theory (CBT) approaches to the treatment of insomnia. They also include simple relaxation techniques designed to shift attention from cognitive activity (characterized by an active busy mind) to one of calmness or even emptiness.

I think you'll be relieved to discover that a lot of this advice and treatment theory is not all that helpful. Generally, this is a good thing, as I find many of my clients either fail at implementing the various strategies, or they find that while they can, the techniques simply don't help (to induce sleep). As we'll see later, while striving for a calm mind can be helpful, it can also be a two edged sword because it's almost impossible to achieve. Any failure to calm your mind simply gives you yet another thing to worry about, which itself is likely to keep you awake. As we'll see, mental activity is not necessarily the enemy of sleep induction providing it is the right type of activity.

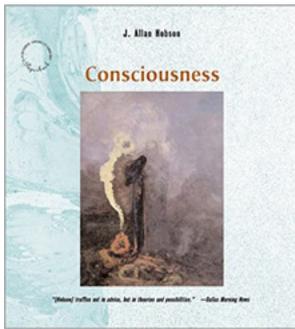
In Chapter 4 of this book I explore how mental activity can both inhibit sleep, and enhance it, and how we can use my technique to do less of the inhibition and more of the enhancement.

### **BLIS™ - The (new) Third Leg Of The Sleep Stool**

So, what is this new third leg of the sleep stool?

My experience in helping pilots shows that the two approaches, sleep hygiene and cognitive therapy, while helpful, are not in themselves sufficient to induce sleep. The third leg exploits the final requirement for sleep. You may have succeeded through great sleep hygiene to achieve the right chemical soup for the brain, and used CBT techniques to make the shift from external to internal attention and concentration, but unless the type of brain activity has shifted to a particular electrical state, sleep will not come. This electrical state is measured (in a lab) by an EEG <sup>4</sup> which reveals the type of electrical patterns

4 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electroencephalography>



*Consciousness* — J. Allan Hobson

W.H. Freeman and Company

ISBN: 978-0716760405

### **Are We Only Looking In The Places We Know?**

A driver drops his car keys and begins his search. It's night. When asked by a passer-by why he's looking in that spot, he responds with:

"I'm looking where the street light illuminates the footpath."

Maybe our search for solutions to insomnia fit this example? Have we restricted our search to look at just those factors we know how to influence, like sleep hygiene and thinking?

As Hobson's model shows, the complete solution requires a search that includes Activation, which until now has been outside our immediate influence.

picked up from electrodes attached to the scalp.

In short, wakefulness is associated with relatively short frequency EEG wave patterns called Alpha waves, while sleep on-set is associated with long frequency Delta waves.

We've actually known that there are three legs to the sleep stool for some time. A sleep researcher at Harvard, J Allan Hobson<sup>5</sup> first wrote about them in a brilliant book called "Consciousness" in 1980. However, almost all attention has been given to the chemical and cognitive factors and almost none to this brain activity factor. It's likely this third leg has been ignored because we've simply lacked an understanding of how we can actively induce the shift from Alpha to Delta waves. We've limited our solutions to things we've known how to do for a long time; unfortunately most of those things are simply dressed up variations of advice your mother could have given you. Our focus has been on two legs of a three legged stool.

Perhaps we've also been seduced by the common sense notion that sleep happens when the activity level in our brain declines, when in fact, it's not so much a decrease in the amount of activity level that's important, but rather a shift in the kind of activity that really makes a difference.

The third leg of the stool, and how to achieve it can now be revealed. It's always been there, but getting the brain to transition from Alpha to Delta wave activity has always been left to chance. When I began helping pilots with sleep problems I resolved to make sleep treatment a skill, something they could control, rather than the conventional approach which is largely to eliminate all the things that inhibit it, leaving sleep onset to chance, as something that just happens to you.

If you complete this book, and watch the videos, we'll be able to reveal to you how this third leg works, and how you can acquire the skill of inducing restful sleep, on demand and at will. ❖

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan\\_Hobson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Hobson)

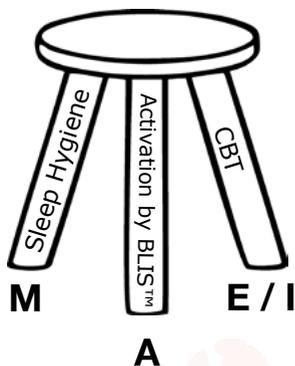
## Chapter 7: The Promise Of BLIS™

*The best bridge between despair and hope is a good night's sleep.*

*E. Joseph Cossman*

We do have a Sleep Switch that flips from wakefulness to sleep when the brain has a certain combination of:

- i. neurochemicals (M),
- ii. internal focus (I/E), and
- iii. electrical activity (A).



***The 3-Legged Sleep Stool***

The type of sleep we experience, and its quality, is also moderated by the different mixes of those same combination of factors.

It follows from this that the solution to insomnia needs a three factor approach. However, until now approaches to solving insomnia have almost always been limited to influencing the neurochemicals though attention to Sleep Hygiene, and the state of internal thoughts influenced through CBT. The third factor, Electrical Activity, has been ignored simply because we've lacked a method of direct influence, or a suitable lever. That was until the discovery that eye movement can influence the shift of brain activity from Alpha to Delta waves.

This ability to influence brain waves has been under our noses for some time, but has not been previously recognised for what it is. EMDR practitioners have known that their clients become sleepy, and studies have shown that EMDR does shift the brain's electrical activity from Alpha to Delta waves.

For those of you who are looking for the BLIS™ technique's validation from hundreds of studies employing controlled double blind techniques and tests of statistical significance, I say simply that you may have to wait a bit. Significant discoveries in health (and other fields) often emerge from insight, which

occurs when someone discovers a link that's always existed but is observed for the first time. Specific Gravity<sup>1</sup> had always existed but it took Archimedes lying in a bath to discover a method which compares the weight of the object with the weight of water displaced by that object to make an actual measurement of specific gravity. Science often works through this type of serendipity—discoveries are replete with observers who identified something new and unexplained in their work. In that respect BLIS™ is no different. We'll need to wait a little longer for the validation studies beyond the many case studies of success and the discovery that EMDR promotes slow wave sleep. After all, I can claim a very close precedent. Francine Shapiro introduced her EMDR breakthrough because she saw it work with her clients—the scientific validation studies came much later.

For those of you who are prepared to make a modest investment, mostly in your time, in the reasonable expectation that you will overcome your insomnia, then your time has arrived. I'm not urging you to do anything more than learn to do the BLIS™ technique until you can do it in the middle of the night, with confidence, without thinking. I'm not urging you to experiment with brain surgery on yourself or even spend any money on a course, App, or counselling. I'm urging you to practice a new technique in the context of a Sleep Switch model that has good foundations in plausible sleep science.

The breakthrough technique revealed here is the third leg of the Sleep Switch stool. In my 50 years in this (Psychology) business I've seen plenty of advice and practices that relate to the first two legs of the stool, but until the discovery of BLIS™ I've not seen any simple attempt or technique to manipulate brain activity—the transition from Alpha to Delta waves. I flirted with brain entrainment in the 1990's which required listening to bi-laterally received sounds, but my mind wandered and falling asleep with earphones on was always problematic. Close, but no cigar.

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1 The ratio of the density (mass of a unit volume) of a substance to the density of a given reference material.

Now I'm able to present to you a bi-lateral stimulation technique that you control, which brings about the necessary thought control, and exploits the connection between lateral eye movement and Delta waves. Once you've mastered it you'll make the nightly (and small hours) transition from wakefulness to sleepiness as easily and as regularly as watching the sun go down. Indeed, if all we had to do was to watch the sun go down, tuck ourselves into our beds with the knowledge that today was done and tomorrow can wait, then maybe we would fall asleep as effortlessly as we desire. But most of us stay up using artificial light so we can turn night into day and thus get more done. It seems that our modern life demands that we do more stuff, and for women in particular, staying awake longer to do more stuff has been a dubious reward for their liberation.

This book has given you the tools to influence all aspects of the Sleep Switch. I hope you absorb them and get a good night's sleep.❖

### **From 'Why We Sleep' by J .A. Horne**

"So many of them (my colleagues) have offered theories of sleep function which may be prophetic visions of the truth. But if they are, these prophesies have not rallied the faithful. None of these theories have compelled large numbers of sleep researchers to say - I believe. Yes, this is the function of sleep" (p2).

"The answer will not come from checking lists of possible misinterpretations, but from a new idea or result which possibly coalesces our facts and fantasies. It will probably come at four in the morning in a dingy laboratory in Minneapolis to a graduate student in biology who never read this paper. God bless him" (p16).

J.A. Horne

WHY WE SLEEP

*The Functions of Sleep in Humans and Other Mammals*



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Absolutely, but please don't give away this copy!

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## About This Publication

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