

**H**ere's a quick questionnaire. Are you: 1. A person living an automated life? 2. Having very little time to relax and unwind? 3. Constantly on the move? 4. Multi-tasking and whose mind is constantly busy?

If you've ticked all of the above and feel that the points below describe you, consider yourself a semisomniac:

1. Persistent low-grade exhaustion due to poor sleep
2. A person with this kind of sleep disorder wakes up feeling sleepy and not rested even after six-eight hours of sleep. Sleep expert Dr Neil Stanley has coined the term Semisomnia to describe the inability to get a good night's sleep and Dr Stanley puts it down to our modern lifestyle, pressures and strains that go along with it.

There is a fine line dividing semisomnia and insomnia. Insomnia is a condition due to which an individual has difficulties in going to sleep (taking longer than 30 minutes), and has disturbed sleep.

An individual suffering from insomnia can't go to sleep even if the body is rested and relaxed.

Semisomnia describes 'persistent low-grade exhaustion due to poor sleep'. Semisomnia is nothing but a milder version of insomnia (poor sleep). People with semisomnia can't sleep as they are preoccupied with many things and don't get enough time to sleep.

Dr Stanley identifies three main reasons for poor sleep patterns and quality of sleep.

### 1. ALWAYS-ON

Our 21st-century lifestyle means that things never stop. We can shop, watch TV and work 24 hours a day.

# CAN'T SLEEP, CAN'T STAY AWAKE

You know of insomnia. But have you heard of semisomnia – a condition that leaves you constantly exhausted due to poor sleep?

We can always go online and find information... the list goes on. We have an overload of information and many people hate switching off, whether it's literally turning off their TV or computer, or turning their minds off.

### 2. MOBILE-BUSHED

Not everyone has high-powered jobs, but more people are working from home and can be reached all the time, even in the dead of night.

There is a fine line between work and home life for many and they find it hard to turn either off. Could this

be because of technology?

### 3. THE BUZZ IS IN YOUR EAR

It is believed that 66 per cent of people are regularly kept awake anxious about money, work or family issues and 69 per cent of people who get a bad night's sleep put it down to stress, worry and not being able to switch off.

### Many sufferers

"Researchers have discovered that devices emitting bright lights confuse human brains and sleep pat-

terns. Techies are spending too much time with electronic media – staring at the computer screen all day and living in a virtual environment. Bombarded with information overload, the mind becomes overburdened. This, along with continuing internet and social media usage through the day, contribute to a crowded mind with poor ability to relax and unwind," says Dr Roshan Jain, senior consultant psychiatrist and de-addiction specialist, Apollo Hospitals, Bangalore.

About uncertain work timings, Dr Jain adds, "The IT industry working 24x7 for different time zones contributes to the change in biological clocks which blurs work-life boundaries. People carry work home and work until they drop off to a poor night's sleep."

When Sowmya Shah, who works at an MNC, realised that she was sleeping poorly, she consulted a psychiatrist. She says, "The doctor told me to wind down before going to bed. This apparently improves the quality of sleep."

Dr Stanley insists on spending at least 30 minutes every day winding down. The 'Three Rs' to help get you ready for sleep are:

**Resolve:** What's on your mind and how can you put it aside until tomorrow?

**Relax:** What helps you stop, sit down and take time out?

**Release:** What helps you mind switch off from your day-to-day pressures and allows you to think about nothing in particular?

A warm, milky drink and quiet time, device detox, sleep only when you are sleepy, read a book, relax in a bath, use your bedroom only for sleep and not TV, think of some calm and peaceful place, and take deep breaths.

Quite truly, early to bed, early to rise, makes us healthy, wealthy and wise.

