Identify Target Behavior:

I chose to implement a nightly ‘getting ready for bed’ routine. Since my divorce I struggle falling asleep at night. I often stay awake reading a book, or watching TV. Most nights I fall asleep on the couch. There is something very child-like and safe about falling asleep on the couch, and I think this feeling reinforces the behavior. I can remember as a little girl falling asleep on our couch in the living room. My mother would always wake me up and tell me to brush my teeth, put my pajamas on, and go to bed. I always resisted. I just wanted to remain on the couch, wrapped in my blanket. I was warm, comfortable, happy, and safe.

Baseline Data:

I observed my sleep patterns for one week. I began on Sunday night and continued for seven days ending my observation on Saturday night. Five out of the seven nights I fell asleep on the couch either reading a book or watching TV. I would consistently wake up around 3am, go into my bedroom and climb in to bed. Three out of the five nights I was unable to fall back asleep once I moved to my bed. This caused me to be extremely tired the following day. As a result, I struggled to focus throughout the day. My school work suffered as well as my morning workouts. Overall, the structure of my day was negatively affected by the lack of a good night’s sleep.

Stimulus Conditions:

One of the two stimulus conditions is my television. I enjoy watching TV at night after I complete my homework. If the TV is on, I usually stay up later and ultimately fall asleep on the couch.

Another stimulus condition is my apartment. If I am at home by myself at night I am often times distracted by my own thoughts. These thoughts also contribute to lack of focus, late nights, and falling asleep on the couch.

Finally, the third stimulus condition is my couch. It is so comfortable, and my dogs love to snuggle at night which creates a very warm environment for me to fall asleep.

Setting Goals:

My goal was to implement a ‘getting ready for bed’ routine Sunday night through Thursday night. I decided to give myself a break on Friday and Saturday nights. This routine would consist of:

- Eating dinner before 7pm
- Completing my homework by 9pm
- Walking the dogs after I finish my homework at 9pm
- Getting into bed by 10pm
- Lights out by 10:30pm

After walking the dogs at night I was allowed to either watch TV for one hour or read ‘in bed’ for up to thirty minutes.

**Remove/Encourage Stimulus Conditions:**

The first stimulus condition I removed was my television. I was not allowed to watch TV until my homework was complete and the dogs had been walked. After these conditions had been met, I permitted myself to watch TV for one hour, or read in bed for thirty minutes. If I chose to watch TV I was not allowed to sit on the couch. I would have to sit on a chair or on the floor.

By removing the first stimulus, I also removed my third stimulus, the couch. Since I do my homework and eat my dinner at my desk, the only time I sit on the couch is when I watch TV or read at night.

Now I needed to focus on my apartment. Since I am unable to remove this stimulus, I decided to do my homework outside of my apartment either at Starbuck’s or Whole Foods. For the next two weeks, I would come home from school, walk the dogs, eat dinner and then go to Starbuck’s or Whole Foods.

**Identify Punishers and Reinforcers:**

Every night I fall asleep on the couch, I will not be allowed to watch any TV the following day. I felt this was punishment enough since I enjoy watching TV and I live alone. The reinforcer of implementing a going to bed routine is that I will be more focused and have a greater amount of energy the following day.

**Design a Program:**

I decided to punish on a continuous schedule. Every night I fell asleep on the couch I would not be allowed to watch TV the following day/night. As stated above in the “Setting Goals,” my routine will consist of:

- Eating dinner before 7pm
- Completing my homework by 9pm
- Walking the dogs after I finish my homework at 9pm
- Getting in to bed by 10pm
- Lights out by 10:30pm

After walking the dogs at night I was allowed to either watch TV for one hour or read ‘in bed’ for up to thirty minutes.
 Upon returning home from school I would walk my dogs, eat dinner, and then go to Starbuck’s or Whole Foods to complete my homework.

Upon completion of my homework I would return home, walk my dogs and then reward myself with either one hour of TV sitting in a chair or thirty minutes of reading a book in bed.

**Results:**

At the end of two weeks, I successfully implemented a ‘going to bed’ routine, found a new favorite place to study end even met some interesting people.

I was very surprised with the results of this program. In the beginning I was neither optimistic nor confident I would succeed. During the winter I do not want to trek outside especially at nighttime and walk to Starbuck’s or Whole Foods. However once I associated the walk with walking my dogs, I forced myself to do it. If I care enough about my dogs to walk them at night in the cold, certainly I can place the same value in myself and go to Starbuck’s or Whole Foods. I also began to see the value in getting out of my apartment. The change in environment was crucial to the success of this program. It forced me to expand my comfort zone and be more social.

The experiment also taught me a lesson about time management and added more structure to my day. Since I knew every night I would be going to either Starbuck’s or Whole Foods, I found that I did not waste so much time at my apartment. Not being allowed to watch TV really helped my stay focused on the program.

After returning home from completing my homework I was surprised to realize that on certain days there isn’t really anything interesting on TV. I only have it on for the noise and the distraction.

Overall this was a great experiment. As a result of implementing a ‘going to bed’ routine I had more energy throughout the day and I was able to focus for longer periods of time. I also felt better about myself. Whole Foods is my new favorite place to study and going there is something new to look forward to instead of being alone in my apartment.