**Sleep**

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**Getting a good night’s sleep**

Getting enough of the right kind of sleep is vital for our health. Everybody appreciates a good night’s sleep. But what ***is*** a good night’s sleep? Sleep is not just the brain turning off and resting. Every night, we need to have two kinds of sleep

1. **Deep sleep.** During deep sleep the day to day wear and tear on our body tissues is repaired and our immune system is refreshed. We need enough deep sleep to restore our bodies and renew our energy. It is also important for learning as we tend to process information and our memories of the day during deep sleep. Deep sleep tends to happen in the first half of the night.
2. **Dream sleep** (also called rapid eye movement or REM sleep because our eyes dart around behind our closed eyelids during this phase). In dream sleep, our brain repairs our emotional system. We need dream sleep to help calm us down if we have become wound up and stressed during the day; and to work through the emotional aspects of our memories, so that we can start tomorrow feeling calmer and clearer.

**How much sleep is enough?**

Most adults sleep between 6-9 hours a night. Some people are short sleepers, they manage on 6-7 hours, and some people are long sleepers and need 8-9 hours. Basically, if you wake up refreshed and energised and ready to start the day, you are getting enough sleep, however many hours you have had. However, if you wake up still feeling exhausted, in a daze or unable to concentrate properly, and feel the need to sleep during the day, then you are probably not getting enough sleep.

**Morning Larks and Night Owls** - Some people prefer to get up early and go to bed early (Morning larks), whereas others prefer to go to bed late and get up late (night owls). Others are more in the middle. Only you know best about what sleep duration you like and what times of the day and night you want to seep, and when to get up.

There are two factors which control or desire to sleep.

1. **Sleep pressure** - this is quite a simple concept. Basically, the longer you have been awake the more your desire to sleep increases. So, sleep pressure builds during the day and then we feel tired at night.
2. **The Circadian Rhythm** – human beings have an internal body clock that determines when we go to sleep and when we wake up. This is largely controlled by exposure to daylight. We typically feel more awake when there is light and brightness and more tired the darker it gets. For this reason, it is important to get some morning exposure to daylight, especially in the winter months, as this will to help regulate your body clock. It is also affected by having a regular daily routine, such as when you get up and go to bed, when you eat and when you are active. Things that disrupt your routine can also disrupt our sleep.
3. Lastly, your **body temperature** has an influence. We feel more alert when our body temperature is high and more sleepy as it falls (this usually coincides with late evening). Anything that disrupts our body temperature can affect our sleep (this is why the menopause has such a big impact on women’s sleep).

**Pain and sleep**

Pain can have a big impact on sleep but sleep can also affect pain.

Poor sleep is a major risk factor for developing persistent pain.

50% of people with insomnia go on to develop persistent pain.

The quality of your sleep affects day to day pain symptoms, when we are sleep deprived we hurt more.

If you can improve your sleep the likelihood is that your pain will also improve, or certainly your quality of life will.

**Improving your sleep**

When it comes to improving your sleep it is important to differentiate between what you can control and what you can’t control. You cannot **make** yourself sleep. Sleep is a natural physiological process, it is something we “fall into”. In fact, attempts to make yourself sleep are often counter productive and result in more struggle with sleep that leaves you feeling more frustrated, alert and awake! So, what can you do? Two things:

1. There are some common barriers to sleep which can build up in our lives and learning how to remove these can help.
2. You can learn new ways to respond when you struggle to sleep that don’t keep you stuck in a cycle of sleepless frustration.

**Removing barriers to sleep**

There are four key areas to look at:

1. **R**outine
2. **E**nvironment
3. **S**timulants
4. **T**hinking

You can remember them by thinking of the word R.E.S.T

**Routine**

* Sleeping through the night is a behaviour that we learn. It isn’t actually natural - parents have to teach their children to do it! It may be normal to sleep only at night in cold countries, but in hot countries it is common to take a two-hour sleep during the heat of the day and sleep fewer hours at night. So, our sleep habits are learned. And we can learn bad habits as easily as good habits. When people are not sleeping at night it is easy to get into a routine of going to bed later, watching TV or being active at night, and then sleeping in late, or sleeping for long periods during the day. This is a guaranteed way to have a permanent problem with your sleep.
* **Establish a regular sleep schedule.** This involves setting a regular bed time and wake-up time and making every attempt to stick to it, even at the weekends. This will help to set your body clock in a way that will improve your nighttime sleep. The worst thing you can do is have a chaotic sleep routine where some nights you go to bed very late, and get up late, while others you go to bed very early. The single most important thing you can do is to have a consistent wake up time. Even if you have had a bad night’s sleep, or it is the weekend. Don’t vary your wake-up time based on how you slept. Don’t be tempted to try and catch up for the sleep you missed. If you get up at a different time everyday it confuses your body clock and this will lead to sleep problems. Try to maintain a wake-up time within a consistent 15-minute window every day.
* **Winding down -** To get your brain used to switching off ready to go to sleep you need to create a routine that you learn to associate with preparing to go to bed and going to sleep. This can be anything you like. Taking a long, warm scented bath, doing yoga, or relaxation exercises, reading to the children, laying the table for breakfast and so on. It is a good idea to find something that allows you to focus on ‘doing’ rather than ‘thinking’, and one that calms you down ready for sleep.
* Getting to sleep and waking in the night - After about twenty minutes if you are not even close to falling asleep then get up and do something calming in a dimly lit area. You do not want to stimulate your brain and wake yourself up more. You also don’t want to reward your brain for being awake, otherwise it will think that it is more interesting to be awake...especially if you provide treats like a cup of tea and a biscuit, or some other food and drink you like. Equally you do not want to be doing anything stimulating like watching the TV or scrolling through your phone or on the computer. Do something relaxing (you might meditate or use a relaxation technique) or really boring...like a household task you don’t like, or reading a boring book (stood up in a cold room). You want your brain to think that the bed is the best place to be...that it is warm and comfortable and relaxing and that you like being there. As soon as you start feeling tired go back to bed.
* If you are still awake 20 minutes later, get up and do another extremely boring task or something calming. It might be the same one or it can be another one. Or go back to that boring book. Your brain will soon realise it is going to have to endure this treatment instead of getting fed or stimulated and it will quickly learn to let you sleep.
* **Napping** is a source of much debate. Should you or shouldn’t you? Well the answer is it depends on your health circumstances. Some health issues require that you get additional rest. But, if you are sleeping during the day and not at night then you should look to cut the nap out and look to improve your sleep at night time. If you do nap then the timing is very important. It needs to be early enough in the day that it doesn’t affect your night’s sleep. For example, between 2-3pm when the body has a natural slump. The worst thing you can do is to fall asleep in front of the television in the evening because this reduces your need to sleep at night.
* **Daily routine** – It might seem strange to say this but what you do during the day has a big impact on your sleep at night. Your brain likes you to have a routine that doesn’t change much day to day. This helps it sleep, but it also helps to regulate your mood, your appetite, your digestive system and all manner of other bodily processes. If you never have set times to sleep and eat, and be active then your brain and body gets unsettled and things start going awry (especially your sleep). So, try to have a daily routine where you get up, eat, rest, and are active at regular times which usually don’t vary too much day to day.
* **Pacing** – when you have persistent pain if you are a person who pushes themself to the limit on a good day trying to get through your ‘to do’ list, which flares your pain up, then these increased pain levels are going to have a big impact on your sleep. If you end up with high pain levels at night because you have done too much during the day, then you will have difficulty sleeping. Equally if you have high levels of pain and so you spend your day doing very little, then you will feel more uncomfortable from sitting about and resting all day, this increase in pain will make sleeping difficult, but also because you will not have used much energy then you will not have the same need for sleep.

**Environment**

The right sleeping environment will increase your chances of getting a good night’s sleep.

* To sleep well your brain likes your bedroom to feel safe, calm, quiet, cool, dark and boring! You want your bedroom to be a place that you enjoy being in. The more pleasant and calming your bedroom, the more you will want to spend time there. Really think about the colours on the walls, and the furniture that you have in the room.
* Ensure your **bed is comfortable**. Look at your mattress and pillows regularly to check they are still supportive. There is a lot of information out there about what is the best bed (there are endless adverts on the television!) Ignore all these adverts. Try a bed out! Test them in the shop for a decent amount of time (regardless of how embarrassing you find it).
* **Bedding** – think carefully about the type of bedding you use throughout the year. Make sure you change it so it is appropriate to the season. Think about the type of duvet you buy and the material it is made from.
* **Nightwear** – Wear clothes that keep you warm or cool depending on the time of year. The closer you keep your body temperature to normal the more likely you are to have a comfortable night's sleep. Many women who are going through the menopause experience issues with night sweats that disturb their sleep so this is very important for them to think about their clothing and bedding. There are a number of websites that supply specialist night wear for women in this situation. There are also products that help keep you cool, such as the Chillow Pillow. There are a number of similar pillows on the market. Even M&S sell them.
* Make sure you are not too hot or cold in bed. Maintain a comfortable temperature in the bedroom. Extreme temperatures may disrupt sleep or prevent you from falling asleep.
* **Sleeping position** – the position that you sleep in is very important for people who have persistent pain. Many people find that they can no longer sleep in the position that they used to due to the pain they experience, and they often wake in the night uncomfortable from having been in one position for too long. There is no right or wrong in terms of sleeping position, it is just about experimenting to find what works for you. Having said that we often find that the best position for most people is side lying in the recovery position, with your upper arm, and uppermost leg supported on a long ‘body pillow’. This prevents you from moving about so much and takes the pressure off the lower back and neck and shoulders. Body pillows can be bought very cheaply from many good retailers. 





* **Light and sleep** - Melatonin is a chemical released by your brain to help you to fall asleep and stay in a deep sleep. You can help your brain release more melatonin by changing the type and amount of light that you are exposed to throughout the day and during the evening. Too much light in the evening tricks your brain to think it is daytime and this reduces the amount of melatonin it produces. Before bedtime avoid having bright light in the room. This includes the light from TV screens, laptops, Smart Phones, Ipads/and Iphones. Dim the lights in the rooms you are in during the evening, especially for the last hour before you go to bed. If you have to use your electronic devices consider changing the settings to orange light rather than blue light, or wear orange glasses that will block the blue light. You can download an app that will filter the blue light if you prefer.

Even when you are asleep too much light can affect sleep quality to ensure your room is completely dark. Use blackout curtains/blinds. You might want to use an eye mask.

* **Noise –** Most people find it hard to sleep when there is a lot of noise around. Noises from outside, or within the house can easily disturb us. Especially if noises are short, sharp, intense or unpredictable. Sometimes it is possible to get away from the noise (perhaps your partner snores and you chose to move to another room), or alternatively use some ear plugs to reduce the sound. You can also try masking the noise with a different noise. Some people use a fan or a white noise machine (or phone app). You can also download pleasant background noise to help you sleep. This can be relaxing as well as masking other noises that you don’t find restful.

For some people they need to change how they are emotionally affected by the noise. Noise can trigger anger or frustration. Maybe it starts a cascade of thoughts like ‘Doesn’t he know I am trying to sleep’, ‘He’s so selfish’, ‘Why are they making so much noise’, ‘I’ll never get to sleep at this rate’...and so on and so on. The emotions that these types of thinking patterns generate will just serve to agitate us and make it even more difficult to sleep. A key skill for improving sleep is to learn the ability to stay calm even when these noises are going on. Have a look at some of the relaxation exercises in this leaflet and the Relaxation Information Pack.

* **White noise** – some people find that having background noise (what is referred to as white noise) can help them sleep. There are apps that you can use for this. Some people like to have a fan on in the bedroom creating a background hum.
* **Other people** – What do you do if you have a snoring partner? Or if they hog the entire duvet or disturb your sleep in some way? Well of course you have a number of options. Separate bedrooms being one of them. Ear plugs being another. On a more practical level it is possible to buy pocket sprung mattresses that accommodate two different bodies more easily, or zip and link mattresses. You could both have your own single duvet too.
* **Keep the bedroom for sleep** - People who do not sleep well tend to bring lots of things into their bedrooms, to occupy themselves while they are not sleeping. This means that they learn to associate their bedroom with doing things other than sleeping. Essentially, they learn that they go to bed to watch TV, play on the computer, read, shop on their phone, answer emails, and work on their laptop and so on. Good sleepers do these sorts of activities elsewhere and only use their bedrooms for sleeping and sex. Keeping the bedroom only for sleep really helps because your brain learns to associate it with sleep. Just entering the bedroom becomes a strong signal for sleep.
* **If you are working from home** - Don’t have your ‘office’ in your bedroom you will find it hard to switch off to sleep as your mind will associate the room with work.
* Try spraying some lavender around the bed or use a lavender pillow. Many people find that the scent induces sleep. There are a number of similar aromatherapy products that might also help you sleep. Scents are very individual to you so try out a few and see if it makes a difference.

**Stimulants - The enemies of good sleep**

Here are some common stimulants that will mess with your sleep:

* **Caffeine –** Caffeine is a stimulant and will make it hard for you to go to sleep, so try to avoid drinking coffee, tea and fizzy drinks (which often have caffeine and sugar in them) for at least four hours before you go to bed. Ideally longer if you can. Caffeine can have an impact on your brain for about 8 hours after you have had some. So, people who really have trouble in getting off to sleep are recommended not to have caffeinated drinks after lunch time.
* **Alcohol –** Many people use alcohol to help them sleep. Alcohol is a sedative so it feels like it is helping you drift off to sleep, but even if it helps you fall asleep quicker, alcohol actually makes your sleep worse. It causes you to have shallow, un-refreshing sleep. It robs you of deep wave restorative sleep and reduces dream sleep. This means it impacts your memory, concentration and emotional state. Too much alcohol will also make you dehydrated and if you have consumed large amounts you will need to get up to use the loo. If you want to drink alcohol stick to the recommended daily allowance and drink earlier in the evening and not in the two hours before you go to bed.
* **Fluid Intake** - Drinking too much in the evening – Some people drink a lot of liquid in the evening and then need to get up in the night to go to the bathroom. If you can limit the amount of fluid you drink in the evenings (particularly in the four hours before you go to bed) then this could help you to sleep through the night undisturbed. There is a myth that a hot milky drink can help you sleep. But, it is just that, a myth! A warm drink will raise your temperature, which doesn’t help sleep, and milk is full of fat and sugar which is not easy to digest. And, you will be getting up for a wee because of it!
* **Smoking** - Nicotine is a stimulant which raises our blood pressure and heart rate. As a result, it will make it hard to drop off to sleep and to get the deep sleep that you need to feel rested and refreshed. Smokers tend to sleep very lightly and often wake early in the morning due to nicotine withdrawal. If you must smoke in the evenings try to avoid doing so in the 2 hours before you go to bed.
* **Technology** - Avoid blue light in the evening, such as that which is emitted by TVs, Iphones and Ipads. Blue light will tell your brain that it is daylight and you should be awake. It is important not to be using these types of equipment at least an hour before you go to bed. Many devices have a way to change the settings to orange light which is more restful for the brain. Televisions cause a similar problem. Many people say that they watch television in bed to relax them and help them fall asleep but the light that they emit will disrupt your sleep and they are generally a source of interest and stimulation and are more likely to wake you up and prevent you sleeping properly, especially if you are tuning in to the news, or a murder mystery!
* **Exercise** in the day is very good for your health and for your sleep. We will only sleep if we have been physically active during the day. If you have been sitting about most of the day, or have napped during the day then it will affect your sleep at night. However, heavy exercise too close to bedtime is not good for sleep. This is because exercise raises your heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature all of which do not help people to get off to sleep. So, don’t take exercise within two hours of bedtime. The same advice applies for carrying out any strenuous activity prior to going to bed.
* **Eating** – Avoid eating late. Especially if it is a big meal which is hard to digest. Eating late in the evening has the effect of raising our body temperature as our stomachs get to work digesting and absorbing our food. The sugars in our food are also absorbed quickly by our bodies and this will give us a boost of energy which will make you more alert when you want to be falling asleep. Equally make sure you are not starving hungry as that can wake you in the night.
* **Vitamin and mineral supplements** – many people have read that having a shortage of certain minerals such as magnesium can have an impact on sleep. For most people these trace elements are easily consumed in a balanced diet and there is very little evidence for their impact on sleep. However, there is some evidence that having good levels of Vitamin D can have a positive impact on your sleep. Vitamin D is produced by our skin when it is exposed to natural daylight. Many people have a shortage of this vitamin, possibly because they spend very little time outside, or wear sunscreen throughout the year. Our British climate is less conducive to us being outside with exposed skin than in some countries. Getting Vitamin D from our diet can be difficult. Oily fish are the best source. For this reason daily supplements, especially in the winter may be helpful.

**Thinking –** of all the sections in this handout this is the most important as it deals with both removing barriers and learning new ways to respond to sleeplessness. It is also the most challenging to deal with, but well worth the time and effort you put in to approaching things differently.

* **Worrying about not sleeping** – This is probably one of the biggest causes of not sleeping! When we don’t sleep then the natural tendency of the mind is to start worrying about why we are not sleeping and how we can get better sleep. But, unfortunately the more worried and stressed we get the more unlikely we are to sleep. To drift off to sleep we need our minds to be calm and relaxed, or bored, and if your brain is constantly monitoring whether you are asleep or not then you are unlikely to drop off. If you find yourself obsessing about your sleep and constantly worrying about if you have had a good or bad night’s sleep this will lead to sleep anxiety. Also, the more frustrated and agitated you get about not sleeping, the less likely you are to sleep. A vicious cycle! But, a very normal one because there can feel that there is a lot of pressure to sleep. We worry that we won’t cope the next day… that our fatigue will be terrible and we will be good for nothing… that our pain will be terrible, so we put a lot of pressure on ourselves to sleep well…every night we worry about what our sleep will be like and we think to ourselves ‘I **must** have a good night…and I **must** do anything and everything possible to ensure this happens. The more we worry…the more stress we have, the less likely we are to sleep…all this pressure we put on ourselves backfires. Sleep advice can feed into this by giving us a list of things we must do to get the perfect night’s sleep and to fix the problems we have with our sleep. People have usually tried lots of things to improve their sleep. The problem is not that people are trying to do something to improve the situation, the problem is they are trying **too hard**. Trying to control sleep usually backfires. We go to bed thinking:

*‘I have to get a good night’s sleep! If I can’t sleep, I can’t function! I must get to sleep! I can’t carry on like this!’ ‘I have to get a good night’s sleep! If I can’t sleep, I can’t function! I must get to sleep! I can’t carry on like this!’*

And not surprisingly this increases our anxiety about sleeping and that makes it impossible to sleep.

Instead, what we want you to do is to treat your time in bed as an opportunity to *rest and restore yourself* –whether you’re sleeping or not. So, if you’re in bed, but you’re notsleeping, the idea is to use that time to do something that’s restful and restorative. That might include “unhooking skills” that help you change your relationship to your thoughts and be present in the moment, or any other activities that you find restful, soothing or calming.

Throughout the day if you find yourself worrying about your sleep, and when you’re lying there in bed, we encourage you to deal differently with those thoughts about sleep. We want you to notice you are having the thoughts and name them, to say to yourself: ‘I’m having the thought that I won’t sleep again,’ or ‘Aha! Here’s the ‘no sleep’ story! I know this one!’ or ‘Hello anxious thoughts; here you are again’, ‘Here’s worrying’, ‘Thanks mind! I know you just want me to sleep better - and it’s okay, I’ve got this handled.’ By dropping the struggle with sleeplessness, you break the vicious cycle that escalates your wakefulness and give yourself the chance for rest.

* **Let go of your expectations** - One of the issues behind some of this worrying is our beliefs, expectations and worries about sleep. Maybe we have beliefs that we will be ill if we don’t sleep, maybe we are worried that if we don’t sleep, we will not function during the day, or feel unwell. Maybe our expectations are that we should have 8 hours a night, or that we should sleep through the night without waking up. All sorts of concerns might be running through your head related to sleeping. It can be helpful to try and write down some of these to find out what you are thinking. When you know what you are thinking you can investigate whether this is a real concern or just your mind panicking.
* **Don’t worry about whether you are sleeping or not.** You can be reassured that most of the time you will be getting some of the rest you need, and that if you are alive, then you will be sleeping. Most people sleep more than they think and if you are in bed resting your body then it doesn’t matter that you are not physically asleep. If you are doing relaxation techniques or in a deeply restful state, then this is almost as helpful for your body. Remember, ***nobody*** sleeps perfectly every night of their lives. To have occasional problems with sleep is perfectly normal, it’s part of being human. Also, the regulation of your sleep across many nights is more important than any single night’s sleep.
* **Clock watching** - If you keep looking at the clock and wondering how many more hours there are until the morning or doing some other times of mental calculations about how much sleep you are having...or not having...then remove the clock from the room. If you have a reliable alarm you do not need to know the time at night and it can easily become something for your mind to become obsessed and stressed by.
* **Paradoxical intention – Trying to stay awake.**..this might seem a weird thing to ask you to do but for some people to disrupt their worries about not sleeping we ask them to try to ‘stay awake’. When you go to bed instead of trying to go to sleep and worrying about whether you are dropping off or not, we encourage you to try to stay awake. For some people the effort of trying to stay awake means they fall asleep (like when you are trying to stay awake on the sofa so you can watch your favourite programme and you wake up when it is over!)
* **The impact of stress –** For many people sleep issues are a result of stress in their lives. There are many things that can cause us stress. Living with pain and fatigue is a huge source of stress! Many stresses don’t go away they accumulate. This means that we can sometimes be in a constant state of stress. When this happens our bodies (and minds) are always ‘switched on’ in a state of ‘Red Alert’. We produce the hormones adrenaline and cortisol that fires us up, increasing our heart rate and blood pressure, making our breathing rapid and shallow, making us hot and sweaty, and our muscles tense ready for action. Cortisol is part of our sleep regulation system and over time your higher than usual cortisol levels make it harder to fall asleep, stay asleep and wake up feeling refreshed. You end up feeling alert but exhausted. Finding new ways to cope with this stress during the day will have a big impact on your ability to “switch off” at night.
* **Worrying** - If you spend your day worrying this will also have a direct impact on your quality of sleep and your mood. When we go to sleep at night our brains have different phases of sleep. Deep sleep, which is mainly to restore the body and dream sleep which is to calm you down and deal with any worries. If you spend you day worrying you end up having lots and lots of dream sleep and this can mean that over time you start to feel more aches and pains and you may be generally more unwell. You will often end up waking at 5am feeling like you haven’t sleep and are exhausted. This is because your brain has been busy dreaming all night, which uses a lot of energy. If this continues we can notice that our mood becomes low and we feel depressed.
* **Busy Mind** - Many people lie awake with endless thoughts buzzing around in their head. When we are lying there trying to drop off to sleep there is nothing else to distract us from them. You may find that the same thoughts are going around and around in your mind and so it can be very difficult to ‘switch off’ and go to sleep. How can you get your mind to be less busy?

1. **The ‘To Do List’** - If your mind is having lots of thoughts about planning or remembering then keep a pad by your bedside so you can make a ‘To do list’ to get the things you want to plan or remember out of your head and onto paper. That way your mind will be reassured that you will not forget them. You can also keep a notebook for more general thoughts that are going round.
2. **Keeping a ‘worry’ diary -** If you tend to lie and worry about general life stresses and this prevents you from falling asleep try writing them down, either on a pad of paper or in a specific journal. List the thoughts/issues that keep going round in your head that worry you. This will get your worrying thoughts of your head and onto some paper, leaving your mind quieter and more ready to fall asleep.
3. **Have a worry time -** Set aside a worry time for rational problem solving during the day or in the early evening (not just before bedtime). Choose a specific time in the day when you feel calm and can sit and do nothing but deal with those worries. During this time go through your list of worries and either make a plan of action about how you are going to deal with the situation or if it is not a situation you can change spend the time just being aware of your thoughts and watching them come and go. Ideally you will need about 15 minutes. When worries come into your mind at night (or throughout the day!), either note them down on some paper (or in your journal) to worry about later or just mentally push them away telling your mind that you will deal with them during your ‘worry’ time. People often find it is much easier to block out intrusive thoughts when they know they can give them their full attention later.
4. **Say “Stop!”**

If a particular worry keeps coming into your mind, sometimes just staying “Stop!” very loudly to yourself, inside your head is enough to prevent it from having house room for a while. This will allow you to pause, notice that you were caught up in your head worrying, write the thought down, take a deep breath and put your attention back on what you were doing.

1. **Three good thing**s – some people find this exercise very helpful at night to get their brain focused on the good things that are happening in their lives rather than their worries. Think back over the day and think about three things you enjoyed, appreciated or were grateful for. You might find it helpful to write them down with a note about why they had such a positive impact for you. You might write about things that have gone well during the day, or you might think about the people that you care about and the impact they have had on your day.
2. Creating a feeling of **safety** is incredibly helpful to allow our brains to fall asleep. Make a list of safe places that you can go to in your mind. They can be real or imagined. Really focus on how they make you feel physically and emotionally. You could also have a list of safe people that you can bring to mind. They could be with you in your safe place, or you could imagine talking to them, or just being with them. There might be lovely memories that you can think about too. You might have smells or sensations that make you feel safe. For example, having a lavender bag in the bed or vanilla hand cream, or a very soft or weighted blanket can create feelings of safety.

**7. Try some relaxation techniques**

You can use any relaxation techniques that calm you and induce sleep, perhaps play a relaxation track or listen to soothing music (use headphones on your IPOD/phone if it will disturb your partner). There are lots of free and subscription apps that you can use. Some people find that listening to the spoken word is particularly relaxing, such as listening to an audio book telling you a story. There are a large range of audio books available to download for free through the local library service, or they can be easily accessed online and through a large number of apps. Choose something nice and relaxing, with a reader who has a voice that you find calming. I know of one lady who’s husband read her a story (which sent them both off to sleep).

Anything that helps relax your mind and takes it away from constant thoughts about your sleep or other concerns in your life will help you. I have known people listen to the shipping forecast, or one lady listened to episodes of the Archers (apparently she rarely made it past the soundtrack!)

Here are some quick relaxation ideas you might like to try that don’t involve any technology:

* Lie comfortably in your bed and close your eyes. Take a deep breath, hold, and then breathe out as slowly as possible. In your own time take a second, deep breath, hold and breathe out as slowly as possible. Allow your breathing to slow down, breathing calmly and easily, making each breath out slightly longer than the breath in.

Now take yourself off in your imagination to a peaceful, beautiful, quiet place. Perhaps imagine yourself walking along a beach at sunset, or perhaps somewhere you have been on holiday. Or just go to somewhere that makes you feel calm and relaxed as if you have left all your cares behind you.

Every so often say to yourself, ***“Sooner rather than later, I can drift off to sleep”.***

Another way to allow you to fall asleep is this:

**The 3-2-1 technique:**

Notice 3 sounds you can hear (they can be different or the same sound), like your breath, noise of your heartbeat, or breath sounds...

Notice 3 physical sensations in your body, like your face on the pillow, or your arms touching something, or the duvet on your body

Notice 3 images in your mind, any three images that come to mind will do.

Notice 2 sounds you can hear

Notice 2 physical sensations in your body

Notice 2 images in your mind

Focus on 1 sound

Focus on 1 physical sensation

Focus on 1 image in your mind.

Keep going through this routine until your mind drifts off.

We have a large pack of information on relaxation that we can give you if you would like to learn more techniques.

**Remember –** sleep is not something you can control but it is something you can facilitate. Think about which of the above information most applies to you and have a go at making a few changes. If you find yourself caught up in rigidly trying to follow all the “tips” above and it is causing you more stress come back to one simple idea:

**Bed is a place for rest and comfort; a place to treat yourself with kindness and caring whether you are awake or asleep!**

**Further information**

Hopefully some of the information in this leaflet will help you to get that good night’s sleep that we all dream of. There is endless advice about sleep, but here are some more sources of information that you might find useful.

**Booklets**

<https://livewellwithpain.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/How-to-sleep-well-with-pain-online-v02.pdf>

<https://livewellwithpain.co.uk/resources-for-people-with-pain/ten-footsteps-to-living-well-with-pain/sleep/>

<http://painconcern.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Sleep-1.0.pdf>

**Websites**

<https://sleepcouncil.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep/>

<https://www.sleepstation.org.uk/articles/>

<https://www.suffolkmind.org.uk/resources/sleep-better-be-better/>

<https://www.suffolkmind.org.uk/?s=sleep>

**Sleep Apps**

Insight Timer

[www.insighttimer.com](http://www.insighttimer.com)

Headspace

[www.headspace.com](http://www.headspace.com)

CALM

[www.calm.com](http://www.calm.com)

Sleepio

<https://www.sleepio.com/sleepio/nhsinform/333#1/1>

**Podcasts**

<https://drchatterjee.com/guymeadows/>

There are several podcasts on sleep on <https://drchatterjee.com/blog/category/podcast/> as sleep is a popular topic!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zz9ZEI09Zs>

This is a podcast by Simon Mundie called Life Lessons, and this is the episode with Guy Meadows talking about sleep.

**YouTube Videos**

The Sleep School You Tube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@thesleepschool/videos>

Therapy in a Nutshell has a range of videos on managing mental health and sleep

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkGWwyrCoRs>

**Books**

The Sleep Coach – Dr Sarah Jane Arnold (Michael O’Mara Books Limited, 2018)

The Sleep Book by Dr Guy Meadows (Orion books, 2014)

This book will make you sleep by Dr Jessamy Hibbard and Jo Usmar (Quercus, 2014)

Overcoming Insomnia and Sleep Problems – Colin Espie (Robinson, 2010)