

Sleep **Workbook**

A Self-Help **Guide**



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Introduction

Sleep problems are common. Most people will experience sleep problems at least once in their life.

Sleep disturbances can be a particular problem for those who have difficulty with their mental health. It is common for a vicious cycle to start where mental health problems affect sleep and then poor sleep can affect mental health problems.

Establishing a good sleep routine can be an important step in the recovery process.

Common sleep complaints

The most common problems about sleep are listed below.

Tick which apply to you.

- ☐ Not getting off to sleep
- ☐ Waking up in the night
- ☐ Waking up too early
- ☐ Sleeping in the day
- ☐ Sleeping too much (hypersomnia)

Any other problems:

How to use this Workbook

Don't give up!

Like any bodily cycle, changes to sleep patterns can only settle after a period of weeks. Therefore it is important to be patient but consistent.

What works for you?

If something works for you and it is not specified in the handbook, don't be afraid to use it.

Don't panic!

If your sleep cannot be improved then any kind of rest is helpful, especially if it is part of a regular routine.

How can good sleep management help you?

Good sleep management can help with:

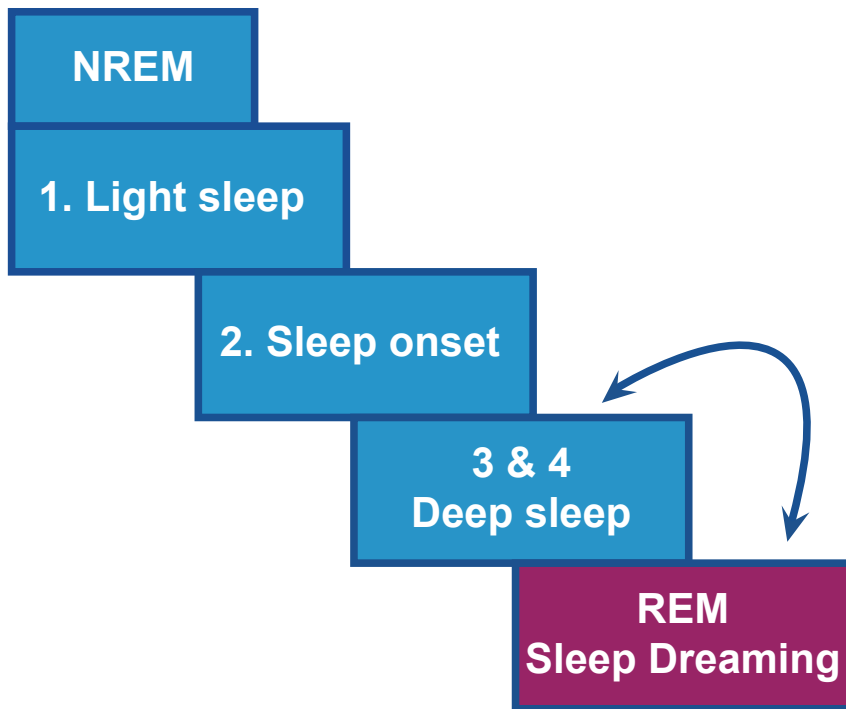
- Regulating mood
- Increasing energy levels
- Concentration
- Capacity to cope with distressing symptoms

There is evidence to show that improving sleep in individuals with psychosis may lessen psychotic experiences.

Sleep as a physical process

The sleep cycle and night waking

Sleep is a physical process – our brains and other organs behave differently when we are asleep. Sleep can be divided into REM (rapid eye movement) where dreaming takes place, and NREM (non-rapid eye movement).



During the night, whilst asleep, people will dip in and out of these stages and wake up several times.

Therefore it is important to remember that if sleep cannot be improved then any kind of rest is helpful. It will be part of one of the natural stages of sleep.

Age

The sort of sleep we need also changes as we get older. For example, a young adult will spend 28% of the night in stages 3 & 4, whereas an older adult will spend approximately only 10%.

	Recommended	Also appropriate	Me
Teenagers 14-17 years			
Young Adults 14-17 years			
Adults 26-64 years			
Older Adults 65 years			

Individual differences

It is a common belief that you should get at least eight hours of sleep a night. This is not true.

During their time in office, Margaret Thatcher only needed 3 or 4 hours sleep a night whereas Tony Blair needed 7 or 8. They would have both been in the same age category but due to their individual needs/differences, they required very different amounts of sleep.

Sleeping as a natural cycle

Sleep is a natural 24 hour rhythm that is regulated by bodily systems. Many environmental factors can affect the running of these systems, in particular natural and artificial light.

How many of these do you do?

Contributing factors to sleep problems:

- ☐ Nap during the day
- ☐ Sleep in areas other than the bedroom
- ☐ Watch television in bed
- ☐ Use a device with a bright screen in the hour before bedtime
- ☐ Consume caffeine after 6pm
- ☐ Smoke cigarettes after 6pm
- ☐ Stay in bed when you can't sleep
- ☐ Drink alcohol before bed

Factors known to promote a good sleep/wake cycle:

- ☐ Exercise regularly
- ☐ Have a regular diet
- ☐ Have a hot bath before bed
- ☐ Have a warm milky drink before bed
- ☐ Have a regular routine of events before bed
- ☐ Make sure the bedroom is completely dark
- ☐ Make sure the mattress and pillows are comfortable
- ☐ Make sure the bedroom is the right temperature

Scheduling outdoor activities and regular exercise increases exposure to natural light and increases daytime exertion. This promotes wakefulness in the day so that sleep can occur more easily at night.



Day time activity:



A relaxing evening activity:

Having a regular bedtime and rise time as well as regular meal times helps to play a part in ensuring these natural rhythms work smoothly.



Bedtime:



Rise time:

Sleep as a habit with cues

Sleep is a regular activity that for most of us becomes a habit. Habits need signals to help run their course. Children might have a routine of bath and story before bed.

The first set of signals to think about is time related:

- A regular time for going to bed
- A regular routine of events or activities before you go to sleep.

Secondly, signals in your bedroom can help strengthen the association between bed and sleep:

- Avoid using the bed to do activities such as watching TV, using the computer and prolonged reading (sexual activity as an exception)
- Avoid sleeping in other areas such as on the sofa
- Make the bedroom a comfortable place to be where rest takes place.

Three cues I can have before bed.

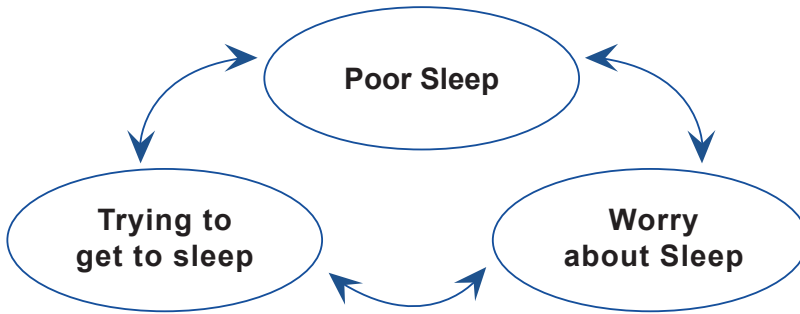
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

“The Quarter of an Hour Rule”

If you are in bed and cannot fall asleep after 15 minutes, get up and spend time relaxing in another room before returning to bed. This helps break the association between bed and sleeplessness and strengthens the association between bed and sleep.

Letting go of the struggle to sleep

Sometimes we enter a vicious cycle when experiencing sleep problems as shown below.



It is common to try hard to avoid unwanted thoughts, emotions and physical sensations associated with not sleeping. This struggle can make things worse.

It may be more helpful to adopt a more accepting attitude towards difficulty sleeping. The greater willingness to experience poor sleep results in fewer struggles, less arousal and therefore greater levels of sleepiness.

Make room for your difficult thoughts and feelings – write them here

Mindfulness - getting present by using the five senses

Mindfulness can help you to step back and observe your unwanted thoughts without becoming caught up in them - a quality that is essential in the normal act of falling to sleep.

Mindfulness exercise – 5 minutes

This exercise should be done in a comfortable and quiet place (bed or chair). Eyes can be closed or open with a soft gaze.

- Take some deep breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth
- Continue to breathe normally
- Feel the weight of your body on the chair/bed – feel it sinking in
- Begin by connecting with the five senses
- Listen to the sounds around you – let them come to you
- What can you smell?
- What can you feel? i.e. the feel of the duvet on your feet
- Thoughts will come and go – gently acknowledge them without judging; bring your attention back to the task.

Phrases to tell yourself

Remember that sleep problems are very common. Be kind to yourself. Here are some phrases to help you gently notice your thoughts/feelings without judgment.

- My mind is telling me I won't sleep
- I'm experiencing some anxiety about not sleeping
- It's OK to feel this way, lots of people do.

Putting it all together

Tips for when you are not getting to sleep

- Is there anything you can do to improve your routine for sleep? Bed, hot drink, read a book
- Look at your environmental signals – is there any more you can do to keep the bed and/or the bedroom for sleep and not sleep elsewhere?
- Do you have a regular bed time and rise time – try and go to bed at the same time each day
- Make sure you aren't sleeping in the day
- Think about stimulating substances and activities you may want to change i.e. watching TV, drinking tea/coffee
- If you still can't sleep, follow **“The Quarter of an Hour Rule”**.

Tips for waking in the night

The most common complaint is waking in the night. If this happens:

- Follow **“The Quarter of an Hour Rule”**
- Try having a warm milky drink
- Avoid clock-watching! (Hide the clock face if need be)
- Practice mindfulness to gently notice any thoughts and struggles associated with not sleeping
- Make room for these thoughts and note them down
- Be aware that waking in the night is a common experience and often part of the natural sleep cycle.

Tips for early waking

- Make sure you have dark curtains and are not being woken by sunshine
- Check what time you are going to bed and/or any pattern of day sleeps.

Other people

If your sleep problems are linked to the noise/behaviour of others, particularly a partner sharing your bed, then you need to involve them in sleep management plans.

- Try to solve problems together and be creative if need be (e.g. if woken by partner leaving the house early then arrange for partner to have clothes ready in another room to change into).
- Some couples spend just the first or last part of the night together. This means they can have intimate time sharing a bed but can also get a good night sleep.

And finally

Remember

- Don't give up! Any changes you make might take at least two weeks to start working as your body needs time to adjust to the new routine. It may even take months if you're making big changes to your lifestyle and plans for wellbeing.
- It is very common to have sleep problems, you are not alone. Try talking to someone about how you feel, they might have had similar experiences.
- If your sleep cannot be improved then don't panic, any kind of rest is helpful as it will be part of one of the natural stages of sleep.



Good luck and sleep well!

Useful websites and apps



For mindfulness

HEADSPACE (app)

<https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>

Buddhify (app) <http://buddhify.com/>



For help and facts

Sleep Foundation <https://sleepfoundation.org/>

Sleep council <http://www.sleepcouncil.org.uk/>

Mind <http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/sleep-problems/#.WCLkjC2LTcs>



Relaxation music

Delta sleep system - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eN-GcYpZ3m8>

Mynoise (app) - <https://mynoise.net>



Notes



A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, spanning the width of the page.

Remember

It may take at least 2 weeks and may even take months if you are making big changes to your lifestyle and plans for wellbeing.

Week 1		Bedtime	My Routine: Cues and Signals	My Bodily Cycle: Things to promote Sleepiness	Daytime Activity	Reflections: How did I Sleep?
	E.G	11:00 PM	Had a bath and listened to some relaxing music	Had a warm milky drink instead of tea	Went for a walk in the sun	I found it hard to sleep so I followed the quarter hour rule
	Day 1					
	Day 2					
	Day 3					
	Day 4					
	Day 5					
	Day 6					
	Day 7					

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