

SUPPORT FOR SLEEP

We have produced this sleep resource by collating information from people who have experienced difficulty sleeping. We hope that some of these suggestions will work for you, but we are certain that not all of them will! It is best to introduce just one at a time so that you can monitor which suggestions work for you.

NB Should symptoms persist, please check with your GP that there are not any underlying physical conditions that are preventing sleep.

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/>

<https://www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk/leaflets.php>

Sleep Routine



Keep to a routine of getting up in good time in the morning - the evidence is that going to bed and getting up at the same time every day (or as close to every day!) is the best routine. Even if you have had a bad night, sticking to your getting up time is really important as it's likely to mean you are more tired the next night. It can be tough but imposing fairly strict times really does work at any age! Don't go to bed too early, you are more likely to lay there awaiting sleep.

Try not to nap during the day

Exercise during the day - but not an hour before bed and good exposure to natural light during the day

Try having a warm bath with calm music

Sleep and a Busy Mind



If you are supporting someone with a busy mind, encourage them to chat earlier in the day, rather than before bed - If worries are talked about in the evening, people are more likely to ruminate over them.

Read a book - nothing too interesting though. If you are laying in bed awake, get up out of bed and read in the corner, on a beanbag for example, then return to bed.

Listen to Audio books (preferably a story you know well)

Listen to classical, soothing music

Allow a short worry time - write anything down that comes into your head then count backwards from 100, focussing your mind on each number for a few seconds so that you can't allow other thoughts in.

Try body scans or other mindfulness routines (Paul McKenna has a new sleep podcast) <https://www.heart.co.uk/podcasts/paul-mckenna-positivity-coronavirus/>

Sleep Hygiene



Use the bedroom at night only and for sleep only

Do not use screens for an hour before bed - colouring, jigsaws & reading are good alternatives

Use a Blue Light filter on your screen

Keep the room well ventilated and temperature of bedding just right

Sleep and Food



Eat regularly and do not go to bed hungry
Warm milky drink - hot chocolate, cinnamon or a few drops of vanilla essence are good flavourings.

Almonds, Walnuts or Turkey for melatonin

Kiwi for serotonin

Try eating toast, oatmeal or rice - as carbohydrates can cause drowsiness
Bananas for tryptophan and magnesium

Senses and Sleep



Lavender spray on the bedding

Silky or soft/cuddly item (my adult daughter still uses this)

Being firmly tucked in (like one would swaddle a baby!) - requires a sheet under the duvet to achieve this and wrap it around

Heavy blanket

Massage - for example of the hands

A candle flame or plug in/ dim light comforting/glow shapes ceiling stickers/fairy lights