

buzz

Manchester
Health & Wellbeing
Service



Sleep Well

A guide to how you can
get a better night's sleep



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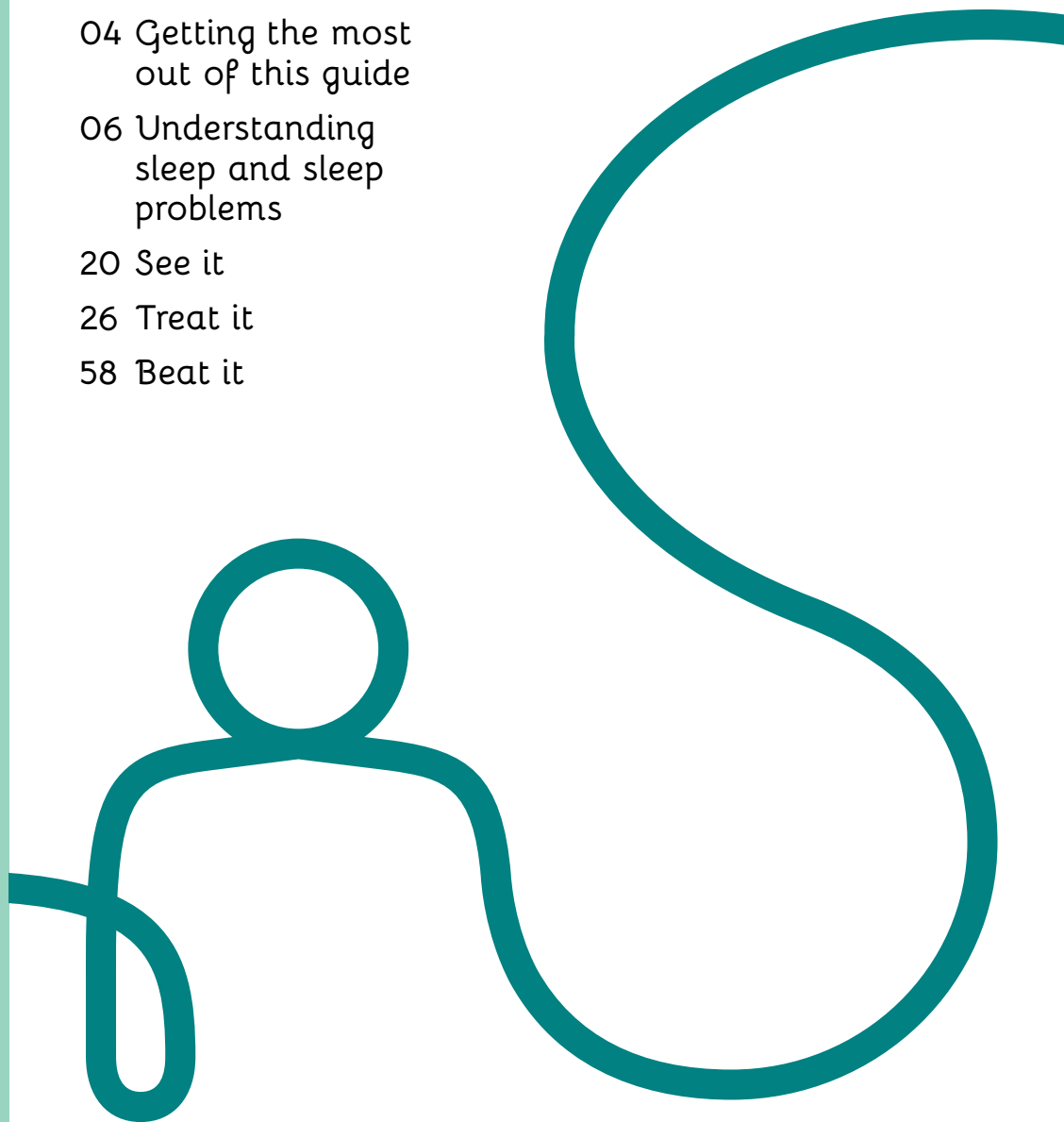
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This guide is one of a series about mental health and wellbeing by buzz Manchester Health & Wellbeing Service. You can find more guides at www.mhim.org.uk

‘Sleep Well’ is all about sleep problems and how to overcome them. It is very common to have trouble with sleep.

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Getting the most out of this guide

This guide aims to:

- Help you understand sleep
- Help you see how poor sleep can affect your life
- Give you ideas to help you improve your sleep

It is possible to improve your sleep. Try not to assume there is nothing you can do. Don't accept it as just a part of life.

There are many ways that people can improve their sleep. We are all different from each other. This means that what might work for one person, might not work for another.

If you find it hard to work through this guide, you might find it useful to talk to someone. This could be a health worker such as your doctor or practice nurse. Your focus, energy and motivation levels may be low right now; so there may be things it would be better to try first.

Understanding sleep and sleep problems

This section explores what sleep is. It looks at what sleep problems are and explains how people can get into a vicious cycle of poor sleep.

See it

This section will help you to assess what leads you to have poor sleep.

Treat it

This section has a range of tips to help you sort out your sleep problems.

Beat it

This section gives you more ideas on how to make progress. It also lists where you can get further support.

As you read this guide, it will ask you to think about what is going on in your life and how you are feeling. There are spaces in the guide for you to write things down. You may find that this helps you think more clearly about how you feel.

What you'll need:

- A pen and maybe a notebook for extra notes
- Time for reading and thinking about how you can help yourself
- Somewhere quiet to read and think
- To keep going and pace yourself by taking one step at a time
- Support from a family member, friend or health professional if needed

Understanding sleep and sleep problems

What is a sleep problem?

We can all have a bad night's sleep. It is very common to sometimes not get enough sleep or have a bad night's sleep but if it goes on for over two weeks, it can become a sleep problem.

You could have a problem if you:

- Lie awake and aren't able to fall asleep
- Aren't able to stay asleep
- Wake up too early in the morning
- Wake up during the night
- Don't feel refreshed when you wake up
- Sleep too much
- Have a health condition that affects your sleep

Many things might be going on that affect your sleep. You may have developed some bad habits that are not good for sleep. Before looking at this in more detail it helps to explore what good sleep is and why you need it.

Why do you need a good night's sleep?

A good night's sleep gives you the rest you need. It is also vital for your health and wellbeing. You need sleep for you to function properly and to be at your best. A lot is going on when you are asleep.

During sleep:

- Your brain can recover and revive itself
- Your brain makes sense of the day and stores your memories
- It helps you have new insights and create ideas
- Your mind can unwind and de-stress. It can restore mental and emotional wellbeing
- Your body builds and mends itself. Sleep lets your body make new tissues. It restores energy levels
- It allows you to recover from illness
- Sleep makes it possible for you to learn and function well during the daytime. It helps you to concentrate much better

How much sleep do you need?

Most people think that they must have seven to eight hours of sleep each night. However the amount of sleep people need varies from person to person. Some people are quite happy on four or five hours each night. Others need nine or ten hours.

The amount of sleep you need depends on what is going on in your life. If you are stressed, ill or very active, it can affect how much sleep you need, you may need more or less depending on how you feel from day to day.

Your need for sleep also changes as you get older. Babies, children and teenagers need more because they are growing. As you get older, your sleep tends to be more broken up.

There is not one set way to sleep. You need to work out what sleep pattern suits you. Having good quality sleep is more important than the amount of sleep you get, the aim is to feel refreshed and rested when you wake up in the morning.

What happens during sleep?

Five stages of sleep

Sleep is not like an on/off switch. You go through a number of sleep cycles during the night. There are five stages to each sleep cycle. It takes around 90-110 minutes to go through all five stages. You can also 'wake up' for one or two minutes a number of times during your sleep time. You probably don't even notice this!

Sometimes you may think you have not had much sleep. This is not always the case. Often you will have had more sleep than you realise because of the way sleep works.

Brain wave activity changes during these different stages of sleep. Stages one to four are called Non-REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep. Stage five is called REM sleep.

Stage one

This is light sleep, when you are nodding off. You are drowsy and start to fall asleep

Stage two

This is deeper sleep but it is still light

Stage three and four

These are stages of deep sleep. Stage four is the deepest stage of sleep. You need this type of sleep the most

Stage five

This is REM sleep because you have Rapid Eye Movements. You dream during stage five. Your brain activity has similar patterns to when you are awake and alert

How does your body know when to sleep?

Your sleep-wake pattern is controlled by the circadian rhythm (often referred to as the 'body clock'). The circadian rhythm manages your body's sleep patterns, it usually follows a roughly 24-hour cycle.

Your circadian rhythm is mainly affected by environmental cues like changes in light and temperature. In the evening, it starts to get dark. Your eyes signal this to your body clock. Your body clock then tells the brain to release the hormone melatonin. This makes you sleepy.

When it gets lighter, the brain reduces the amount of melatonin it produces. This starts to wake you up.

We all have a slightly different rhythm. This is why some people are morning larks and others are night owls.



What can cause sleep problems?

Bedroom environment

Your bedroom is an important part of the sleep process. An uncomfortable bed or the temperature of the room can make it harder to fall asleep. There can also be disruptions from outside your house that affect your sleep like noisy neighbours or living on a busy main road.

Bedtime routine

What you do before you go to bed like watching TV or using a mobile phone can make it harder for you to switch your brain off and makes you more alert which can make it difficult to drift off to sleep.

Stressful life events

Life can be distressing at times and stressful situations can take their toll. It is very common to suffer from a poor night's sleep if you are going through hard times or have been through a loss in your life but over time you should find that your sleep pattern returns to normal.

Mental and emotional health

Your feelings and emotions can affect your sleep too. Feelings of worry, anger, or guilt can keep your mind racing late at night leading to a restless night's sleep.

If you are feeling low or depressed or suffering from any other mental health problems it is advised to talk to your doctor if sleep has been disrupted for some time.

Physical health problems

If you are ill or injured you need more sleep than normal to help you recover.

Pain or physical discomfort can cause disruption to your sleep pattern and keep you awake at night. Having a poor night's sleep can then make the pain seem worse and it can be harder to cope.

Snoring can disrupt both the snorer's sleep and anyone sharing a room with them.

Sleep apnoea can be a life threatening condition. It is where you stop breathing when you are asleep. Usually this only lasts a few seconds but it can last as long as 30 seconds or more. It is caused by the upper part of your airway closing. It is vital to see your doctor if you think you have sleep apnoea.

Unhealthy lifestyle

Poor diet and little activity can lead to poor sleep and it isn't just about what you eat, it's also about when you eat.

Eating foods high in sugar and fat or a very large meal late at night can make it harder for you to get to sleep. Drinking drinks high in caffeine late at night can also keep you awake.

Regular exercise can help you to sleep better but exercising too close to bedtime produces too much adrenaline for sleep and will keep your body alert.

What can cause sleep problems?

Medication

Some medicines can disrupt your sleep. They can stop you falling asleep and staying asleep. Others can make you feel sleepy during the day. These include medicines that you can buy, or those prescribed by a doctor. Many over-the-counter cold medicines contain caffeine, which can keep you awake.

Sleeping tablets may seem like a good idea, but they can make things worse. They don't work for very long, and they lose their effect quickly which means you have to keep taking more. They should only be used short-term. If you have been on sleeping tablets for a long time, do not stop taking them suddenly. You will need to cut down the dose slowly. It is vital that you do this with support from your doctor.

Alcohol and drugs

Drinking alcohol can make you feel sleepy, even a few drinks can affect how well you sleep, disrupting your sleep cycle.

Using drugs such as speed, cocaine and ecstasy can disturb sleep, they can give you nightmares and keep you awake.

No routine

It is harder to sleep well if your day has little structure. If you are unemployed or retired this is a common problem. It can mean that you stay up late, wake up late and nap during the day. This disrupts the sleep-wake cycle. Too much sleep can make you feel even more tired. As can doing little activity during the day. You don't give your body a chance to tire itself out.

Disrupted routine

If you have to be awake during the night, it can disrupt your body clock. This affects your natural sleep-wake cycle. This is common for people who do shift work and those who are caring for a baby. You can feel drowsy when working, have trouble sleeping and find it hard to get up.

Jet lag happens when you travel across a number of time zones. This is because your body finds it hard to adjust to the new time zone. This can affect your sleep pattern and make you feel tired.

“Having good quality sleep is more important than the amount of sleep you get.”

Recognising sleep problems

Poor sleep can affect your thoughts, emotions, behaviour and body. It can also impact the quality of your life and those around you.

One night of poor sleep rarely has a bad effect on your day to day life. Some people think it will ruin their day. An odd night here and there without sleep won't affect how well you will sleep in the future.

Here is a list of symptoms caused by sleep problems. Please tick any that you often experience.

You feel...

- Annoyed more easily
- Aggressive
- Low in mood

Your mind is...

- Racing/difficult to switch off
- Underestimating your ability to cope
- Underestimating help available
- Unable to control or stop worrying
- Imagining the worse case scenario
- Concentrating on bodily sensations

Your thoughts might be...

- More negative, for example, 'things are never going to change'
- Can't think straight
- Can't concentrate and focus
- Find it hard to make decisions
- Become forgetful

You might behave by...

- Napping during the day
- Finding it hard to stay awake during the day
- Finding it hard to do daily tasks like housework
- Making mistakes either at work or while driving
- Snapping at people or your pet
- Taking a lot longer to complete things
- Drinking, taking drugs or smoking

Your body symptoms are...

- Feeling sick
- Headaches
- Little energy
- Tired
- Tearful
- Heart racing
- More coughs and colds
- Feeling like you are not really there

If you have ticked a number of these boxes, you seem to be having symptoms of poor sleep. However, don't be alarmed, this is common. There are things you can do to improve your sleep. You will find some useful ideas in this guide.

What might happen to your wellbeing in the long-term?

When poor sleep goes on for a long time, you can get problems like:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Increased risk of heart disease
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Increase in weight

What keeps sleep problems going?

Meet Jo. We will find out more about Jo and her sleep problems throughout this guide.

Jo's situation

Jo had an argument with a friend earlier, now she is lying in bed trying to sleep. She has thoughts about the argument running through her mind. These thoughts make her feel annoyed, so she starts to feel tense. This makes her toss and turn. She starts to feel anxious about not getting enough sleep. She keeps checking the clock. This shows her just how much time she has been lying there trying to get to sleep. Now Jo starts to feel angry that she can't sleep. She feels herself getting hotter and hotter. She begins to worry that she has a lot to do the next day and will be too tired to do it.

The next morning Jo wakes up feeling tired. She feels like she has no energy. During the day, she catches herself almost nodding off at work. Jo finds it hard to focus on what she is doing. It is harder to get on with other people. They seem to get on her nerves, so she ends up in another argument.

When Jo gets home, the last thing she wants to do is the housework. She just feels too tired. Instead she has a nap on the sofa. When Jo gets to bed that night it is hard for her to get to sleep because she had that nap. She also worries more because she has already had one night without much sleep. And the cycle continues...

The good news is that this cycle can be broken.

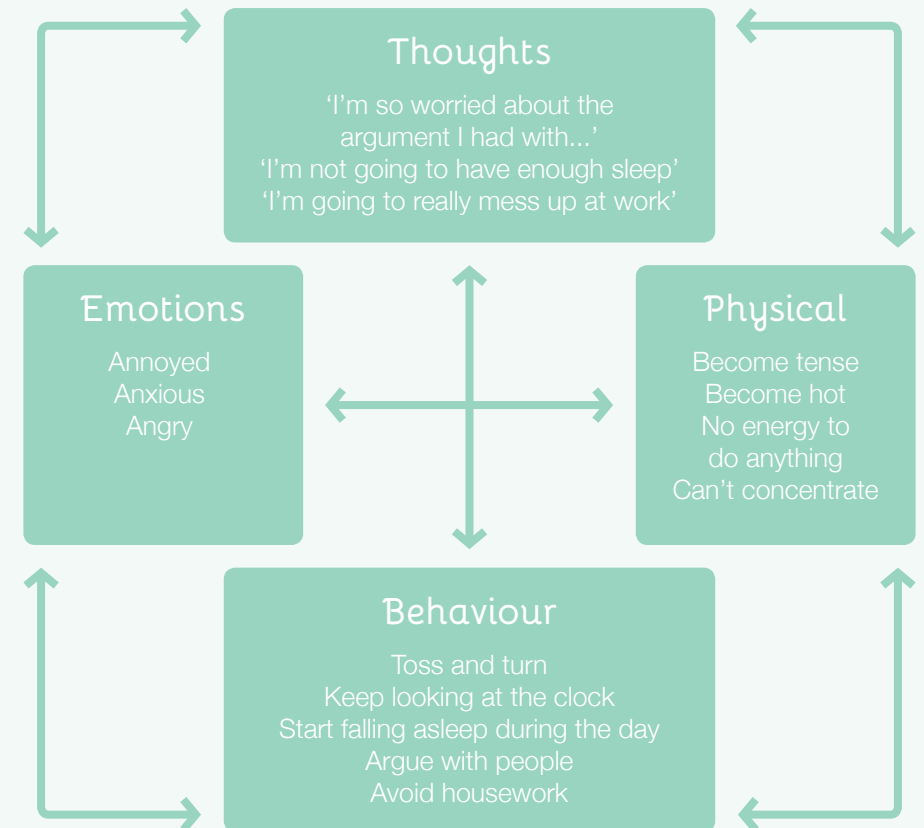
Remember you can improve your sleep. So don't give up!

Model of what keeps sleep problems going



The model below shows an example of what keeps sleep problems going. Jo has a busy day ahead of her, she is lying in bed trying to get to sleep. What she thinks affects her emotions and how her body feels influencing what she does or doesn't do.

Look at the arrows in the diagram. It shows that your thoughts, emotions, behaviour, physical body and life situation all affect each other creating a vicious cycle.



Your situation



Exercise

Think about your own experience of poor sleep.

Write down your experiences in the 'Your ideas' section of this guide on page 61. Now fill in the chart below. It will help you to see how poor sleep is affecting your life and where you could make some changes. Use the symptoms checklist from pages 14 and 15. You may want to add more after you have done the 'See it' section.

Thoughts

Emotions

Physical

Behaviour

What next?

Once you can see your vicious cycle, you can start to do something about it. The good news is that if you make a small change in one area, it will help the other areas.

So, by making changes to how you think or behave, or how your body reacts physically, you can improve how you feel. This can break your cycle of poor sleep.

It can be tough to make changes at times. You might try something that doesn't quite suit you. Or you might think that it won't work before you even try. Maybe you haven't given it a proper chance to work. Or you may not have done it for long enough.

You need to find what suits you. So remember:

- Give it a go rather than assume it won't work
- Start small and try one small change at a time

Before making changes, you have to have some idea of what it is that is leading you to have poor sleep. That is what you are going to look at next in the 'See it' section.



See it

There could be things in your life that are causing you to sleep badly.

In this section you will be asked to think about some of the things that might be disrupting your sleep.

Once you have assessed your bedtime routine, you will need to monitor your sleep. Use the sleep diary on pages 33 to 35 of this guide. You will find out more about the sleep diary in the 'Treat it' section from page 26.



Your situation



It is important to link your bedroom with sleep. If you watch the TV or eat in bed, your body might start to think that the bedroom is for being awake.

Do you have the following in your bedroom?

Tick yes or no.

	Yes	No
TV and/or radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital alarm clock	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A ticking alarm clock	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clutter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Books to read	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have ticked yes to one or more of the above, they may be affecting your sleep.

There may be changes that you can make so it is easier to fall asleep in your bedroom. You can find some ideas in the 'Treat it' section.

Bedtime routine

To get a good night's sleep, you need to allow your body to relax. The body needs to wind down as you prepare for bed. It helps to start to do this an hour before you go to bed. What do you do during that time?

Write down what you do an hour before bed in the space available.



Exercise

What causes you to sleep badly?

Is there anything that affects your sleep? Things like your mood, napping, amount of caffeine you drink and watching TV in your bedroom. You may need to come back to this page once you have kept your sleep diary for two weeks, to see what it can tell you about your sleep habits.

Write what causes you to sleep badly in the space provided.



Exercise

Worries

Do you lie awake worrying in bed?
There is more information about
how to reduce worries that are
affecting your sleep at night from
page 36 onwards.

Write down any worries in the
space provided.



Do you have any poor sleeping habits?

Tick any of the boxes
that apply to you:

- No bedtime routine
- Go to bed late
- Get up late
- Nap during the day
- An inactive lifestyle
- Exercise late at night
- Do something that keeps
you alert before bed
(e.g. play computer games)
- Keep looking at the clock
when in bed (clock watching)
- Use a computer and/or
watch TV in the bedroom
- Use a smart phone with
a glowing screen
- Drink caffeine drinks in the evening
- Eat lots of fatty or spicy foods
- Eat late at night
- Eat and/or read in bed
- Drink alcohol close to bedtime
- Take drugs (prescribed or illegal)
- Smoke cigarettes close to bedtime

Treat it

You should now have a better idea of what is affecting your sleep.

Look at the things you have found impact on your sleep in the 'See it' section. Then go to the relevant part of this section to help you 'Treat it'.

Do not try to do everything at once. Instead, choose one thing to change first. You can then move onto another area later.

Bedroom environment

Room and body temperature

The best temperature for sleep is around 18°C. This is because your body temperature goes down when you are sleeping.

To help you sleep at night, you could have a hot bath or shower a couple of hours before bedtime. This will make your body hot at first. It will then start to cool down. This will help you to feel sleepy.

Feeling too hot in bed can make you restless, waking you more, preventing you from entering a deep sleep. Turn down your heating or open a window to cool a room. You could wear less in bed, or use less bedding.

Feeling too cold can make it harder to fall asleep. For a cold room, you could try more bedding. Wearing more layers and socks in bed can also help as can using a hot water bottle.

Fresh air

Fresh air promotes sleep. A stuffy room can make it harder to sleep well. Try having the window open if your room is stuffy.

Light level

The dark helps you feel sleepy. Light can wake you up. Find a light level that is right for you.

Try to make your room as dark as possible. Lined or thick curtains can help. They can block outside light. They will keep out the morning light which can wake you. Some people prefer to wear an eye mask.

The light from electronics can make it harder to fall asleep. This is why looking at glowing screens close to bed is a bad idea. Hide your digital clock from view so the light won't disturb you.

If you do not like complete darkness, you may find that some low level lighting may help.

When you get ready for bed, just use a soft bedside lamp to light the room. This helps your body to prepare for sleep.

Use a soft night light in your hall or bathroom. This will help you stay sleepy if you need to get up in the night.

Bedroom environment

Bed and pillow comfort

Old mattresses and pillows may stop you from sleeping well. They will not support your body and head well while you sleep. It helps to change your mattress approximately every ten years. Always go and try out a range of mattresses before you buy one. Turn them on a regular basis to extend their life.

Your position in bed needs to be right for you. Support your body more with pillows, e.g. have them under your knees.

Treat yourself to clean bedding on a weekly basis. This can make your bed more inviting to sleep in. Satin sheets can make it easier to move around the bed, so can satin bed wear. This is helpful if you have problems with movement.

Distractions

Your bedroom should only be for sleep and sex. You need to link your bedroom with sleep. Avoid things like work, study or eating in your bedroom. Take your TV and computer out of your bedroom.

Avoid listening to the radio or reading a book in bed. Do that in another room and only go to bed when you are tired.

Many people take their mobile phone to bed with them. This can be a problem if you are tempted to check it, or it wakes you during the night. If so, switch it off or don't take it to bed at all.

Remove any clutter from your bedroom. This can help you feel a bit calmer at bedtime.

Noise

Noise can make it hard to fall asleep and can wake you up. Earplugs can help, as can changing your bedroom furniture around. Soft furnishings absorb noise. Get rid of your ticking clock if it keeps you awake at night.

Some people do not like things to be too quiet. You could listen to some soothing music or white noise to help you fall asleep. If you do this, use a player that will stop after half an hour.

Bedtime routine

What you do before bedtime matters

Your body needs to wind down at the end of each day. This gets you ready for going to bed. A bedtime routine will help you prepare your mind and body for sleep.

Things to try:

- Give yourself at least 30 minutes to wind down
- Use this time to get ready for bed: have a wash and brush your teeth
- Do things in the same order, like locking up the house, turning out the lights, using the bathroom
- Do something to help you to relax (see page 54)
- Have a warm bath or shower two hours before bedtime
- Only have low lighting on for a few hours before bed
- Go to bed at a set time
- Only go to bed when you feel sleepy

Things to avoid:

- Caffeinated drinks will keep you awake. This includes drinks like tea, coffee and even hot chocolate
- Computers and mobile phones with glowing screens can stop you feeling drowsy
- Activities that keep your brain active make you more alert. This includes decision making and studying
- Talking about stressful things
- TV programmes or films that are exciting
- Reading which leaves your mind active or upset
- Exercise late in the evening

Bedtime routine

Spend less time awake in bed

Your body can begin to associate the bedroom with being awake. This can make it harder to fall asleep.

If you are not asleep within 20 minutes, get up. Go to another room. Do something that is relaxing. Wait until you feel sleepy. Then go back to bed. Keep repeating this until you fall asleep.

Don't try to fall asleep

Give up trying to sleep. It will keep you awake. It can annoy you because you don't succeed. The harder you try to sleep the less likely it will happen.

Try not to worry about how your lack of sleep will affect you. The more you think about it, the harder it will be to fall asleep.

Try one of the methods below:

- Try to keep your eyes open in bed. As they try to close, try to resist for another few seconds. Doing this 'tempts' sleep to take over
- Imagine a calm scene. Picture what it looks like. Think of what you can hear and smell
- Repeat a neutral word (such as 'the') in your head. The word you choose should be simple and relaxing. You could use a word like 'calm'. This can also help you to get away from unhelpful thoughts
- Count backwards in threes from 1000

Avoid clock watching

Looking at the clock when you can't sleep will not help you to relax. Instead, it will probably wind you up. This makes it harder to get to sleep. Move your clock so that you cannot see it, or cover it up.

Relaxation

You can use the relaxation skills in this guide to help you to switch off in bed. They will help your body to relax. They also give your mind something to do.

Try using the breathing skills when you are lying in bed at night. They are on page 52. The muscle relaxation skill can relax your body. It can help to do this if you are restless in bed. It is on page 54.

The guide 'From Distress to De-stress' is about the impact of stress on the body. It contains lots of information and tips that could also help you to sleep better. You can download it free from www.mhim.org.uk



Your sleep diary

A sleep diary can help you to see what affects your sleep. It can also help you to find out what your sleep pattern is really like. It can uncover ways to best improve your sleep. You can then focus on those areas.

Use the sleep diary over the page to help you to monitor your sleep. Try to fill it out as best you can. Don't worry about getting it 100% accurate.

Top tips:


- Fill out the diary every day for at least one week
- Do this each morning when you wake up and each night when you go to bed
- Keep the diary beside your bed so it is easy to fill in

Once you have kept your diary for a week you can start to look for patterns in the way you sleep and what affects your sleep.

Ask yourself:

- What do I do on the days before a bad night's sleep? You will need to do less of this
- What do I do on the days before a good night's sleep? You will need to try to do more of this
- Does the time I go to bed affect my sleep? You may need to change it
- What wakes me up at night? See what you can do to stop this
- What changes can I make to my bedroom that will help me sleep? Plan how you can create a good space for sleep
- What can I do differently before bed to unwind and prepare for sleep? Plan what you will do

Sleep diary



	Daily activity	
	What did you do today?	What did you eat and drink?
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		



Sleep diary

	Bedtime routine				During the night				On a scale from 0-10	
	What did you do before bed?	What time did you go to bed?	What did you do in bed? e.g. read	What time did you go to sleep?	How often did you wake?	What woke you?	How did you get back to sleep?	What was the bedroom like?	How well did you sleep?	How did you feel the next day?
M										
T										
W										
T										
F										
S										
S										

Reducing worries at night

Some people find it hard to switch off at the end of each day.

Lying in bed at night worrying can make you feel tense. It can stop you from going to sleep. You may also wake up early. This is because your mind is busy thinking.

There is a range of ways to tackle worries. There are more in the guide 'Unwind Your Mind'. You can download a free copy from www.mhim.org.uk

Self-talk

We all have a voice inside our head. Self-talk is your inner voice. It is like a running commentary going on in the back of your mind. It can really affect how you sleep.

Negative self-talk is common. It can make it harder to fall asleep at night.

Examples include 'I'm never going to sleep', 'I hate this' and 'I've been awake for hours'.

Positive self-talk can help you relax and fall asleep at night. Create some for yourself. You can repeat the positive phrases in your head when you are trying to sleep.

Here are some examples:

- 'I've gone without sleep before. I can do it again'
- 'Relaxing in bed is almost as good'
- 'My body is learning to sleep well'
- 'I will sleep when I am ready'
- 'It is okay if I can't sleep'
- 'I will be okay'

Tick any thoughts that you find yourself doing:

Blaming yourself
You think things are your fault.
'It's my fault that I can't sleep'

Jump to conclusions
You think things without any proof. You guess what people think and predict the future.
'If I don't sleep, I will be a mess tomorrow'

All-or-nothing thinking
You do not see a middle ground. Things are put into 'either/or' groups.
'I either sleep well or not at all'

Expecting the worst
You expect things to go wrong, no matter what. You expect the worst to happen.
'I'll never get a good night's sleep'

Living by fixed rules
You think you 'should', 'ought' and 'must'.
'I should always feel refreshed when I wake up'
'I must not wake up at night'

Negative focus
You only see the bad things. You see your weaknesses but not strengths.
'I had three bad night's sleep last week'

Challenge thoughts



Example

Unhelpful thoughts can make it hard to sleep at night. They can whirl around keeping you awake. When your self-talk stops you from sleeping, you need to challenge it.

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

What is the unhelpful thought?

'If I don't get enough sleep then I won't be able to do my job'

What evidence do I have for this?

'I feel tired in the morning, I don't think I can function well'

Is my thought opinion or fact?

'Opinion'

What type of unhelpful thinking am I doing?

'I am jumping to conclusions and expecting the worst'

Is there another way of seeing this?

'Things might not be as bad as I think'

What would I say to a friend who thought this?

'You might feel tired but you will still do a good job'

What are the chances of this being true?

'Low'

What is a more realistic thought?

'If I don't get enough sleep then I can still do a good enough job'

Look for evidence

Challenge your unhelpful thoughts by testing them out using these questions:



Exercise

What is your belief?

What would happen if it were true?

What really happened?

Next time you have an unhelpful thought you can follow this process and dismiss it as you know it is not true, you will be able to replace it with a better one.

Worry time

Worry time is about dealing with your worries, you don't want to ignore them but you will set aside 20 minutes a day to address them.

You will need a notepad and pen to keep track of your worries. Keep them with you during the day. When a worry pops into your head, write it down. Put them next to your bed at night. You can then write down worries that bother you when you are trying to get to sleep.

Decide on a time and place for your 'worry time'. When it arrives, work through each worry using the skills in this guide. Remember to time yourself so that you don't over run. The guide 'Unwind Your Mind' has more ideas that can help. You can download a free copy from www.mhim.org.uk

Top tips for managing your 'worry time':

- Assess if each worry is still important. You may find that you were worrying about nothing
- Stop when your 'worry time' is over. If there are any worries left over, just save them for the next day
- Don't worry if you find it difficult to stop worrying it will get easier with time and practice
- When you sort everything out with time to spare, congratulate yourself
- Use relaxation techniques to help you de-stress after your 'worry time'. The guide 'From Distress to De-stress' has lots of information about this. You can download a free copy from www.mhim.org.uk

This is something that takes practice. It can be hard to change the way you think, but it can be done. Just be patient and keep going.

“Just because you think it, doesn't make it true.”

The worry tree

Although worry can be useful at times, it can often get in the way.

If you can do something, then do it. Then you do not need to worry about it anymore. If you are not sure what to do, then problem solve it. There is information about this on page 44. If the worry comes up again you can tell yourself that you have a plan. This means that you don't need to worry.

If you can't do something about it, then try to stop worrying. It will just wear you out. Instead, know that it is safe to stop worrying. Give yourself permission to stop. You could distract yourself if you find this hard to do.

Use the worry tree plan to check out your worries.

Here are some ideas:

- Remind yourself that worrying isn't helping
- Think of somewhere pleasant
- Calm yourself, try to imagine thoughts as clouds and let them float by
- Relax e.g. practise breathing
- Do something you enjoy
- Do something useful
- Write a list of things you could do, then pick one when you need to distract yourself

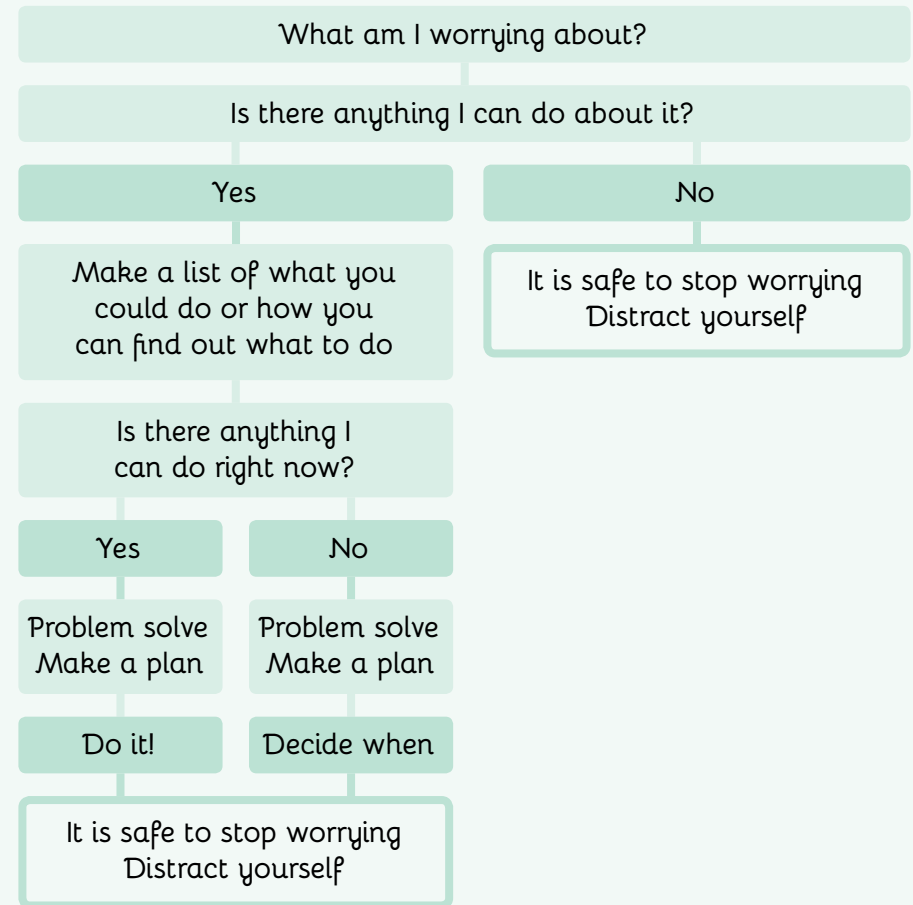


The worry tree



The worry tree helps you:

- Recognise what type of worry it is
- Turn worries into problems that can be solved
- Decide when it is safe to 'let go' of worries



Six steps to problem solving

When people have lots of problems it can feel like there is too much to deal with.

This can affect a person's level of anxiety. It is very easy to spend a lot of time worrying about a problem without finding a way to sort it out. This can make us feel worse and can affect our ability to sleep and think clearly.

It helps to work through a problem in a structured way. Once you have got a plan to deal with a problem you can try it out.

What is the problem?

Identify a problem you want to tackle. You may need to break down a big problem into small, bite-sized pieces to tackle one by one.

What could work?

Come up with as many ideas as you possibly can.

Work out the good/bad

Work out what is good about each solution and then what is bad about each solution.

What will you try?

Choose the one that seems to be the best. Look at the things that are good or bad about each solution to help you decide.

What will you do?

Include what you are going to do and when you plan to do it. It is a good idea to try to think about anything that might get in the way of your plan. You can then think of a step-by-step plan to overcome any obstacles.

What happened?

Review what happened and see how well it worked. If it hasn't, then you can go back to another solution and try that.

Your situation



Use the table below to problem solve a worry or problem you have.

You can use the steps on page 44 to help.

What is the problem?			
What could work?	What is good?	What is bad?	What will you try?
			What will you do?
What happened?			

Lifestyle changes

How you live your life can affect your sleep. Many things can improve sleep. See if any of these ideas could help you.

Napping

Try to avoid napping during the day. If you are tired and feel very sleepy during the day, you may need to take a nap but try limit it to 20-30 minutes (set an alarm so you don't oversleep). If you sleep longer, it can make you feel groggy when you wake up and it will be harder for you to get to sleep at bedtime.

Physical activity

Exercise and being active can help with sleep because when you are active, you use up energy and your body becomes more relaxed afterwards. However your mind may be more active after exercise, so it is best not to exercise right before bed.

Active people fall asleep faster, they also tend to sleep for longer and deeper than inactive people do. Activity that gets your heart and lungs going can improve both the quality and amount of sleep you get. It will take a few weeks for exercise to improve your sleep.

Read the guide 'Physical Activity and Mood' for more information. You can download a free copy from www.mhim.org.uk

Food and drink

There are foods that can help you sleep better, they are called sleeper foods and other foods that can keep you awake, called waker foods.

Sleeper foods include:

- Milk
- Lettuce
- Bananas
- Turkey and chicken
- Nuts such as peanuts
- Whole grains (like wholemeal bread)
- Chickpeas
- Honey

Waker foods include:

- Food and drinks that contain caffeine
- Chocolate
- Alcohol

Other foods affect your guts, making it harder to get to sleep. Some can cause heartburn.

Examples include:

- Spicy foods
- Fatty foods

When food and drink affect your sleep

If you go to bed feeling full you might find it harder to get to sleep or that you wake up throughout the night because your guts are busy digesting your food. You might find that if you drink a lot before bed this can also affect your sleep if you need to keep getting up to go to the toilet.

Tips:

- Avoid going to bed with a full or empty stomach
- Avoid eating a large heavy meal close to your bedtime
- Try to eat your evening meal at least two to three hours before bedtime
- A lighter evening meal is more likely to give you a restful night's sleep
- Avoid spicy or fatty foods if you get heartburn
- If you need to have a snack close to bedtime, make it small and light e.g. a warm milky drink, a slice of toast with peanut butter, a chicken and lettuce sandwich, a small bowl of cereal or a yoghurt

Read the guide 'Food and Mood' for more detail about how food can affect your mood. You can download a free copy from www.mhim.org.uk

Lifestyle and sleep

Alcohol

Alcohol may help you to fall into a deep sleep. However, it can then wake you up. It can keep you in a light stage of sleep. So, you are likely to wake up feeling tired. Alcohol can also make you snore or snore more loudly.

Alcohol can make you wake up to have to go to the toilet because it is a diuretic. This means you will lose more fluid than you have drunk. This makes you dehydrated. You may wake up thirsty in the night because of this. The dehydration can also give you a hangover.

Tips:

- Limit how much alcohol you drink
- Avoid alcohol four to six hours before bedtime
- If you drink alcohol in the evening, have a glass of water between each alcoholic drink

Smoking

Cigarettes have nicotine in them. This drug wakes up the body and releases adrenaline. This makes you more alert and ready for action making it harder for you to fall asleep and stay asleep. You can also have nicotine withdrawal symptoms while you sleep, which might keep you awake.

Tips:

- Avoid smoking at least one hour before going to bed. This will give time for the effects of nicotine to wear off
- If you wake up, avoid having a smoke
- Avoid nicotine patches or chewing gum close to bedtime
- Stop smoking. Please see your GP for more information

Snoring

Sleep on your side where possible. This makes it less likely that your tongue will fall back and block your airflow.

Nasal strips can help improve airflow. Visit the British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association website, you can find the web address on page 62 of this guide. On the website you can do a test that will tell you if nasal strips are likely to help. You can buy nasal strips on the internet and from your local shops.

Losing weight can help reduce snoring. There is support available in Manchester. Speak to your GP for more information.

If you sleep with a snorer earplugs can block out noise, alternatively try going to bed earlier than your partner does, this can help you get to sleep first without being disturbed.

You may need to take it in turns to sleep in another room.

Sleep remedies

There are a range of herbal sleep remedies that you can buy from shops. Some people say that they find them helpful. They include Valerian and Chamomile. There is a need for more research to prove that they help with sleep.

If you take any medicines, check with your GP before using such sleep remedies.

Some people find that the smell of lavender and sandalwood can help them sleep.

How to use lavender and sandalwood:

- Put a few drops of lavender and/or sandalwood oil on your pillow
- Treat yourself to a lavender and/or sandalwood bath before bed
- Buy special lavender pillows or make your own. Heat one in the microwave to release the smell. Then take it to bed to help you sleep

Lifestyle and sleep

Shift work:

- During your shift, avoid food and drink with caffeine. This is because you will struggle to fall asleep later
- Plan a sleep period. Work out the best time for you to sleep. It needs to fit in with your schedule. You may need to experiment to find out what works for you
- Make sure the room you sleep in is very dark and quiet
- Put your phone on silent
- Ask those you live with and your neighbours to keep the noise down where possible. Suggest they wear headphones when playing music or computer games
- Wear earplugs if you have to
- Lead a healthy lifestyle. Your body needs help to work against your natural sleep pattern

Jetlag

Before and during travel:

- Drink plenty of water before and during the flight
- Avoid alcohol
- Avoid eating on the plane. It keeps your body in the old time zone
- Plan to make your sleep on the plane easier. Earplugs, an eye mask and clothes to keep you warm can all help

Once you have arrived:

- Establish a new routine. Eat and sleep at the right times for your new time zone, not at the time you ate and slept at
- Avoid napping as soon as you arrive. Even if you are tired after a long flight, stay active until the correct time to sleep. This will help your body adjust more quickly
- Spend time outdoors. Natural light will help your body adjust to the new time zone

Improve your sleep pattern

The body sleeps best when it has a regular routine. It can be hard to get into a new routine. Here are a few ideas that can help.

Reset your body clock

Try this if you are used to going to bed and getting up late.

Get back into a normal sleep pattern by:

- Going to bed about 30 minutes earlier each day
- Get up 30 minutes earlier each day
- Continue this until you are back to a normal sleep pattern

Retrain your body clock

Try this if you do not have any routine or sleep too much.

Get back into a regular sleep pattern by:

- Going to bed and getting up at a set time every day. Getting up even if you did not sleep for long
- Turn the light off straight away once in bed
- If you are not asleep in 20 minutes, get up. Go to another room and sit down. Do something relaxing until you feel sleepy again. Have a list of things you could do during this time. Keep doing this until you fall asleep
- Avoid napping during the day. It will make it harder for you to sleep at bedtime

Keep doing this until your body gets used to it. It may take a few weeks for this to happen. Be patient.

Relaxation skills

Life can be very hectic. We often do not allow our bodies to unwind. This can make it harder to fall asleep at night.

Relaxation allows your body to de-stress. There are things you can do that will let your body and mind wind down. They can distract you from your worries, many are about doing something you enjoy.

These could include:

- Listening to music that soothes you
- Listening to relaxation or meditation tracks
- Reading a book or magazine that relaxes you
- Doing something creative e.g. draw, knit
- Try some gentle exercises e.g. yoga, Tai Chi
- Meditation or prayer

You can also unwind by using a range of relaxation skills. They have a physical effect on the body and can help relax the mind. It can take a bit of time to learn these skills, but it is worth it. They can really help you to fall asleep. Try doing them in bed at night when you are trying to sleep.

Two skills in this guide are:

- Breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation

There is more information on relaxation techniques in the 'From Distress to De-stress' guide. You can download a free copy from www.mhim.org.uk

Breathing for relaxation



Breathing is a simple way of relaxing the mind and body.

It helps stop the body's 'fight or flight' stress reaction. Try each step in turn. Each one will help you to relax.

First, sit or lie down and get comfortable. It helps to find somewhere quiet to start. Try not to worry about getting it right straight away. It takes practice. When you begin, you may feel a bit dizzy. Don't worry. This is quite common. It will pass, as your body gets used to being relaxed.

Talk to your doctor if you are worried about trying these breathing techniques.

Step one: breathe slowly

Take time to notice how you are breathing
Then start to slow it down

Step two: extend the exhale

As you breathe in, count how long it takes
Then take longer to breathe out
If you take three to breathe in, take five to breathe out

Step three: belly breathe

Place your hands on your belly
Push your belly out to make you breathe in
Pull your belly in to make you breathe out

Progressive muscle relaxation



When you are restless in bed, you can use this skill to help your muscles relax.

The idea is to tense a group of muscles as tight as possible and hold the tension for a few seconds before releasing. As you release the tension, your muscles should feel more relaxed than before.

Lie down in a comfortable position. Once you are comfortable, close your eyes and focus on your breathing (breathe in when you tense your muscles and breathe out when you relax). Start from your feet and move upwards to your face.

Tense each muscle group in turn. Hold for five to ten seconds. Then let go and allow the muscles to relax.

Check your body for any tension left in your muscles. If an area is still tight, tense and relax those muscles a few more times.

You can download a free progressive muscle relaxation audio from www.mhim.org.uk

Talk to your doctor if you have a history of serious injuries or muscle problems and are worried about practising this technique.

Toes

Clench your toes

Feet

Point your feet away from you

Calves

Tighten your calf muscles by pulling your toes up

Thighs

Squeeze your thighs together

Buttocks

Squeeze your buttocks together

Stomach

Suck your stomach in

Chest

Take a deep breath

Hands

Clench your fists

Arms

Move your wrists up to your shoulders and squeeze each arm together

Shoulders

Raise your shoulders up to touch your ears

Mouth

Open your mouth wide to stretch your jaw. Then stick out your tongue

Eyes

Close your eyes tightly

Forehead

Raise your eyebrows

“It helps to explore what good sleep is and why you need it.”



Beat it

Practice, practice, practice...

Things are not going to change overnight. It can be a challenge to change the way you have been doing things for so long. But, with practice it will become easier and easier. In the end, the changes will feel like second nature as you get used to them.

Do not expect too much too soon. It may take some time for you to change the way you think and feel. It is a bit like learning to walk as a toddler. We all fall over at first. You might even bang your head or graze your knee. You keep going despite these setbacks. Eventually you learn to walk. It doesn't happen overnight. It takes time and practice. It is the same for overcoming sleep problems. It is not going to happen straight away. But, it will be worth it in the end.

Diary of progress

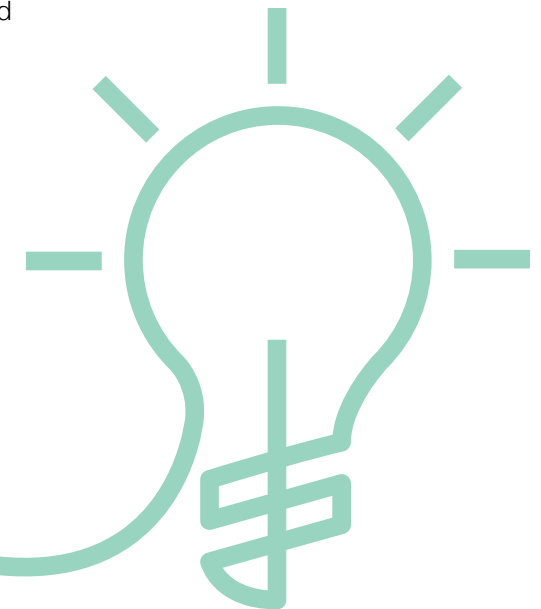
After a while it is useful to go back and check how you are doing. Fill in a sleep diary at least once a month. You will be able to see if there have been any changes.

Coping with setbacks

Everyone has setbacks. Life is like that! The trick is to find ways to cope with them. When they do occur, remember that it happens to everyone. It does not mean that you have failed. It is important not to give yourself a hard time.

When you have a setback, try to remember that you are not back to square one. It can be easy to forget about all the progress you have already made. Try to learn from it. We often learn more from things when they don't go quite right compared to when they go smoothly. Take some time to reflect on what has happened. Try to understand why it has happened and what you can learn from it. You may be able to find a pattern to what is going on.

Finally – don't give up! Getting a better night's sleep can take time and practice. It may take a while to notice an improvement. Remember to take some time each month to look at the progress you have made.



Ladder of sleep



By now, you may have a list of ideas that could improve your sleep. It can help to plan the steps you want to take. Doing too much at once can seem overwhelming. It helps to do a little bit at a time.

How to use the ladder of sleep:

- Write down a list of changes you want to make
- Rank the list easiest to hardest
- Write them into the ladder of sleep: easiest at the bottom (1), hardest at the top (8)
- Start with the easiest change and practise it so you feel comfortable
- Then try the next change on the ladder and practise it so you feel comfortable
- Repeat this with each step on your ladder

Try and practice each item a little bit every day. The more you persist the easier they will become. Set yourself goals and targets to achieve each week, you could write these in the 'Your ideas' section of this guide on page 61. Use the tools in this guide to problem solve any setbacks.

8.
7.
6.
5.
4.
3.
2.
1.

Your ideas

Other sources of help

Books

- **Overcoming Insomnia and Sleep Problems: A Self-Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques**
by C A Espie
- **Insomnia: Doctor I Can't Sleep**
by A Williams
- **The Insomnia Kit: Practical Advice for a Good Night's Sleep**
by C J Idzikowski
- **The Sleep Book: How to Sleep Well Every Night**
by Dr. G Meadows
- **Beating Insomnia**
by Dr. T Cantopher

You can find books about sleep including those above at your local library.

Organisations

- **Sleep Council**
They provide information and resources on improving sleep.
www.sleepcouncil.org.uk
- **The British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association**
They aim to help snorers and their bed partners to improve their sleep.
www.britishtsnoring.co.uk
Helpline: 0800 085 1097
- **National Sleep Foundation**
They provide information about improving sleep.
www.sleepfoundation.org
- **The Children's Sleep Charity**
Helping families sleep better.
www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk
Helpline: 01302 751 416
- **Your Health Professional**
If your problems with sleep are persisting then you should seek advice from your GP to rule out any health problems that may be affecting your sleep

Websites

www.getselfhelp.co.uk

This website offers free Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) self-help information, resources and includes therapy worksheets.

www.llttf.com

The 'Living Life to the Full' website is a free, online life skills course. It covers a range of skills to help deal with everyday stresses.

www.mhim.org.uk

This is the 'Mental Health in Manchester' website. It has information about mental health issues and there are details of local services. It also includes information in a range of languages, and you can download the full range of self-help guides from this website.

buzzmanchester.co.uk

buzz Manchester Health & Wellbeing Service are experts in health improvement and self-care offering one to one support and training for a range of health and wellbeing issues.

www.cci.health.wa.gov.au

This website features free online self-help modules and resources.

ecouch.anu.edu.au

E-couch is a free interactive self-help program. It covers a range of topics. These include modules for depression, anxiety and worry.

moodgym.anu.edu.au

Moodgym is a free online self-help program. It covers a range of skills to help prevent and deal with depression.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk

This is the 'Royal College of Psychiatrists' website. It is an online mental health resource.