

Sleep Soundly

Tips to Improve Your Sleep

Plan for Sleep

Don't wait until you're in bed to plan for a good night's rest, **start winding down before your anticipated bedtime.**

- Exercise during the day
- From the afternoon on, avoid stimulants such as drinks containing caffeine
- Minimise your alcohol intake
- Switch off anything with a back-lit screen 30 minutes before bed
- Eat your last meal a few hours before you intend to sleep
- Lower your energy levels and relax your mind after your last meal
- Create a wind-down ritual you can perform and associate with going to sleep.

In bed

Your mind and body should associate bed with sleep, not work, so **don't take work, study or electronic devices to the bedroom.**

- Make sure your bed and bedding are comfortable
- Keep your bed exclusively for sex and sleeping
- Minimise ambient light including stand-by lights from electronic appliances
- Use a soft reading light you can switch off from your bed
- Avoid back-lit tablets or overhead lights
- Cover your clock or turn it facing away from you.

If you wake up

Only in recent times do we expect to sleep the night through without interruption.

- Remember, **it is perfectly normal to wake during the night**
- If you can't fall back to sleep, get up and do something light
- Don't check the time and don't look at your phone
- Repeat low-energy activities from the 'Plan for sleep' list and only use soft reading light.

If you feel anxious

Write down your thoughts – **get them out of your head and onto the page**. This acknowledges and helps them stop playing over in your mind. Once on paper, you don't need to keep trying to remember them. Your notes can also serve as a to-do list for the following day.

If you find yourself waking up and worrying about the same things, schedule time during the day (or in the evening before bedtime) to address these worries. Don't ignore them and wait for them to demand your attention in the middle of the night.

- If you're worrying about the day ahead, write those worries down
- If you're anxious about not getting enough sleep, write that down
- Move onto an activity that helps you relax, such as listening to a meditation track or reading a book in low lighting (avoid back-lit screens)
- When you're tired again, move back to bed as though going to sleep for the first time.

Stop hitting the snooze button

Hitting the snooze button when you wake up tired is one of the worst things you can do. Going back to sleep for that artificial interval can play havoc with your body clock and leave you feeling more tired, not less. Instead:

- Go to bed earlier or set your alarm later
- Keep moving your bedtime forward until you wake up naturally before your alarm goes off
- Try to improve the quality of your sleep by following the tips provided here, so you can wake feeling rested.

Need help?

If you're still struggling to sleep soundly, or if anxious thoughts continue to keep you awake, **don't be afraid to ask for help**. Once you get into a pattern of not sleeping, it can be difficult to break on your own. Get in touch via our website or head to our Resources page to download a free guided meditation to help you sleep.