



West Lothian
Community Wellbeing Hub

The Good Sleep Workshop

Moving towards a better night's sleep



Workshop Aims



Improve lifestyle factors known to impact **sleep**



Reduce stress associated with **sleep**



Improve **sleep** routine & habits

Workshop Overview



What happens when we sleep?



Why am I not sleeping well?



Creating a sleep schedule



Dealing with a racing mind



Soothing techniques

What happens when we sleep?

The sleep cycle

Stage 0: Wake

Wake time is the time spent in bed before and after falling asleep. It also includes brief awakenings during the night. These episodes are completely normal for healthy adults.



Stages 1 and 2: Light sleep

Light sleep initiates your sleep cycle and acts as a transition to deeper sleep stages. During this stage your muscles begin to relax, your heart rate and breathing slow down, and you wake up easily during light sleep, you can expect the following:

- Muscles relax and may jerk
- Respiration slows
- Heart rate decreases
- Body temperature drops
- Sleep begins.



Stages 3 and 4: Deep sleep

Deep sleep focuses on your body. It is the most rejuvenating and restorative sleep stage, promoting muscle growth and repair as well as waste removal in your brain. In this stage, you have difficulty waking up and are disoriented or groggy if awoken. During deep sleep, you can expect the following:

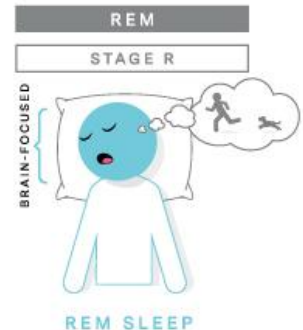
- Blood pressure drops
- Blood flow increases to muscles
- Repair hormones (growth hormone) are released
- Tissue growth and cell repair occurs
- Long, slow brain waves
- Brain flushes out waste.



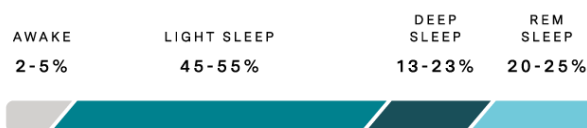
Stage R: REM sleep

REM sleep is essential to re-energising your mind. REM is associated with dreaming, memory consolidation, learning, and problem solving. The time spent in this sleep stage usually decreases with age. During REM sleep, you can expect the following:

- Respiration increases
- Heart rate increases
- Temperature regulation is switched off
- Brain activity is high; vivid dreams may occur
- Blood flow increases to genitals
- Body becomes immobile to stop you from acting out dreams.



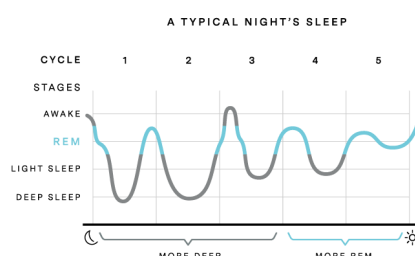
AVERAGE TIME SPENT IN SLEEP STAGES



Each night you take a rollercoaster ride through the different phases of sleep.

Though you're unaware of what goes on while you're sleeping, your brain and body are in an active state. Each stage of sleep has distinct restorative qualities and how you move through each phase plays a large role in your body's status the next day.

During an ideal night's sleep of 7-8 hours, you go through 4 to 5 ninety minute cycles that sample each phase of sleep. Each cycle plays an essential role in maintaining your mental and physical health. The amount of each phase of sleep can vary significantly between nights and individuals. If we are having broken sleep it can mean we are not getting our deep sleep as we always go back to the start of the cycle.



Why am I not sleeping well?

Let's think about your environment

Light: How dark is your room?

Your bedroom should be dark as too much light can cause wakefulness. Using thick curtains or black out blinds can eliminate strong streetlights. Some people find they sleep better with an eye mask to ensure complete darkness.



Do you use your phone during bedtime?

The light from electronic gadgets can impact your body clock and reduce the hormone melatonin. This causes wakefulness.

Comfort: Is your bed comfortable?

Your bed and mattress should be in a comfortable place where you are happy to sleep. If you can feel springs or have a sore back, try buying a mattress topper. It is a cheap alternative to purchasing a new mattress.



Temperature: Is your room temperature comfortable enough to sleep in?

The recommended room temperature to promote good sleep is around 18°C. A cold room (below 12°C) can cause wakefulness and more unpleasant and emotional dreams. A hot room (Above 24°C) can cause us to have restless body movements, less deep sleep and more waking. Investing in a thermometer can help you keep the room at a comfortable temperature.



Noise: Is your sleep environment noisy during bedtime?

Noise is a common enemy of sleep. Loud and unexpected noises can waken people from even deep sleep. Some people may identify as light sleepers and find it important to eliminate noise in the bedroom. You can do so by wearing ear plugs. If your phone is in your room put it on silent, so alerts don't disrupt your sleep.



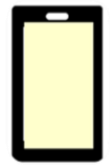
Clock watching: Do you catch yourself constantly checking the time at night?



When unable to sleep straight away we may find ourselves watching the clock. This can cause us to worry excessively and become hyper-aroused. Try to remove clocks and devices that tell time from your bedroom. Relax, sleep will come naturally.

Let's think about your lifestyle

Technology: Are you browsing on your phone before bed?



Technology, such as mobile phones, is used regularly during the day by most people. We often continue using technology before and during bedtime. Avoiding screen time one hour before you go to sleep means your brain has time to turn off. Having your phone or tablet in your bedroom at night can impact your ability to get back to sleep easily.

Exercise: How does exercise impact your sleep?



Exercise causes you to have increased deep sleep, allowing your body to repair and grow. It also reduces the amount of time it takes you to fall asleep. Avoid strenuous exercise before bedtime, as this activates our nervous system leading to problems falling and staying asleep. Try gentle stretching exercises before bed. This can be relaxing and support sleep.

Alcohol: Is your 'night cap' disturbing your sleep?



Although a 'night cap' may seem initially relaxing, drinking too much can impact your sleep. Drinking causes you to wake up during the night for increased toilet visits. It also causes you to wake up because you feel dehydrated. Try to avoid drinking alcohol within 3 hours of bedtime.

Nicotine: Do you smoke before bedtime?



Nicotine is a stimulant and has similar effects to caffeine on sleep. You may find you wake up in the middle of the night because of a nicotine craving. It is important not to smoke at this time, as nicotine leaves the body quickly and another craving may occur later. Try to have your last cigarette 2 hours before bedtime as this is how long it takes nicotine to leave your body. Stopping smoking can help improve sleep and health. Your GP can provide you with support.

Caffeine: Do you consume caffeine products before bedtime?



Caffeine is a stimulant that impacts our nervous system causing us to 'perk up' which keeps us awake. We should avoid products containing caffeine for 6 hours before bed. Caffeine can be found in various products other than coffee and tea, e.g. medication (consult your GP for alternatives). Try drinking decaffeinated tea, coffee, or cola to cut down or eliminate caffeine.

Diet: Do your eating habits affect your sleep?



Having heavy foods close to bedtime or not eating at all can cause wakefulness. This is caused by your body processes involved in digestion and hunger. It is also best to avoid eating if you wake up during the night as your body may start expecting food at this time, causing regular wakefulness. Try some foods that contain melatonin and promote sleep e.g. milk, yoghurt, and peanut butter.

For your information

Did you know some foods contain **melatonin** derivatives so they promote sleep.

Foods that make melatonin	Foods that help melatonin reach the brain
Milk	Porridge oats
Yoghurt	Shredded Wheat
Eggs	Whole wheat pasta
Bananas	Brown rice
Orange	Wholegrain bread
Cherries	Oatcakes
Broccoli	Sweet potatoes
Chicken	Peas
Peanut butter	Baked beans

Did you know caffeine is found in various foods, drinks, and medicines. The caffeine limit for adults is 300-400mg.

Item	Caffeine per serving in mg
Cup of tea	50
Green tea	25
Hot chocolate	16
Mug of filter coffee	140
Large Starbucks Americano	225
De-cafeinated coffee	8
Can of Relentless\Monster energy drink	160
Can of Coke (diet, zero, or regular)	32
Can of Dr Pepper	39
Can of Fanta, Sprite, Lilt	0
Can of Red Bull	77
Lucozade	46
Small bag of M&Ms	6
Chocolate ice cream	2
Chocolate breakfast cereal	2
Small bar of dark chocolate	50
Kit Kat	6
Mars bar	10
ProPlus tablet	50

An experiment

Schedule your evening phone and technology time:

I will stop using my phone at:	e.g. 9pm
Alternative activities I can complete are:	e.g. Relaxation, stretches, light reading
The location where I will store my phone at night is:	e.g. Dining table, hallway cabinet, wardrobe

Can you recognise any lifestyle choices that impact your sleep? What could you change to improve your sleep?

Creating a sleep schedule

Hints and tips



Get out of bed around the same time every day, including weekends



Go to bed when you feel sleepy or tired



Limit naps



Only use your bed for sleep

Importantly, this may mean temporarily reducing the amount of time spent in bed overall to build up a better sleep system.

“Why I am grateful”

A powerful tool to force you to pay attention to the good things:



I am grateful for my family because



I am grateful for my friendship with _____ because



Something good that happened this week



Something silly that I am grateful for



Something else I am grateful for



I am grateful for who I am because

Sleep Diary: Morning

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Day of the week:						
I went to bed at:						
AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM
I woke up at:						
AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM
Last night, I slept for ___ hours:						
Last night, it took me about ___ minutes to fall asleep:						
I felt that the quality of my sleep was: e.g. very good, good, bad, very bad						
This morning, I feel: e.g. refreshed, tired, groggy, alert						
My sleep was made more difficult by: e.g. temperature, noise, dreams, thoughts, not feeling tired, discomfort						
During the night, I woke up ___ times:						

Sleep Diary: Night

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
I took a nap:						
yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no
I had caffeine:						
# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks
<input type="checkbox"/> Morning <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> Evening	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> Evening	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> Evening	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> Evening	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> Evening	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> Evening	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> Evening
I exercised for ___ minutes:						
Medications or drugs I used today:						
Throughout the day, I felt drowsy:						
<input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Very Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Very Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Very Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Very Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Very Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Very Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Very Often
Overall, my mood today was: e.g. positive, negative, neutral						
In the hour before bed, my activities included: e.g. reading, computer, TV, showering, phone, eating, spending time with partner						

Dealing with a racing mind

What triggers a racing mind?



Reflecting on past events



Worrying about future events



Worrying about not being able to sleep



Worry about worrying

What maintains a racing mind?



Fight or flight gets triggered



Body feels alert and ready for action



Worry increases

How to cope with a racing mind:



Use soothing techniques to turn volume down



Writing things down; daytime problem-solving



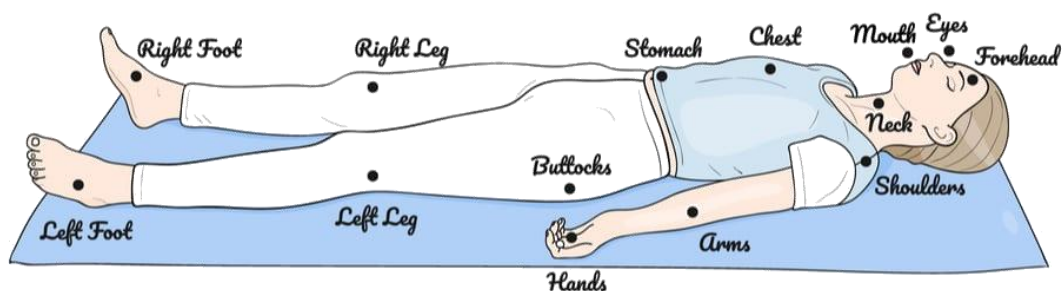
Worry time.

Soothing techniques

Progressive muscle relaxation

How often have you thought, “If only I could relax, I would be able to sleep”? One way of achieving this is progressive muscle relaxation.

Progressive muscle relaxation is based on the tensing and relaxing of the main muscle groups of the body. This leads to a decrease in muscle activity, heart rate, and blood pressure.



Practicing progressive muscle relaxation

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. For each area of the body listed below, you will tense your muscles tightly, but not to the point of strain. Hold the tension for 10 seconds, and pay close attention to how it feels. Then, release the tension, and notice how the feeling of relaxation differs from the feeling of tension.

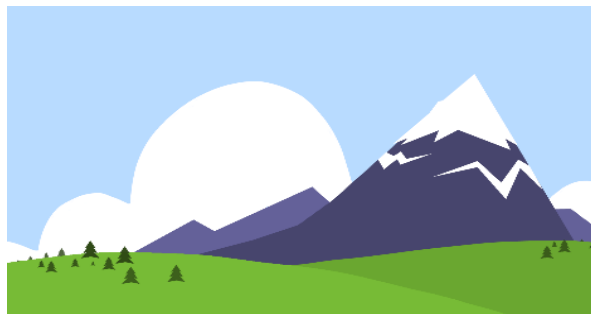
- | | |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Feet | Curl your toes tightly into your feet then release them. |
| Calves | Point or flex your feet, then let them relax. |
| Thighs | Squeeze your thighs together tightly then let them relax. |
| Torso | Suck in your abdomen then release the tension and let it fall. |
| Back | Squeeze your shoulder blades together then release them. |

- Shoulders** Lift and squeeze your shoulders toward your ears, then let them drop.
- Arms** Make fists and squeeze them toward your shoulders, then let them drop.
- Hands** Make a fist by curling your fingers into your palm then relax your fingers.
- Face** Scrunch your facial features to the centre of your face then relax.
- Full body** Squeeze all muscles together then release all tension.

Tips

- You should use your progressive muscle relaxation technique as often as you like but it would be ideal to do it before bed. This will help you unwind before bedtime.
- You should make sure you feel the tension but never tense your muscles to the extent that you feel pain.

Guided imagery



Another relaxation technique, known as guided imagery, can help to switch off racing thoughts at bedtime by creating your own imagery story. This technique is particularly helpful if you find it difficult to switch off your thoughts when you are trying to sleep. It involves visualising a relaxing scene or place that is safe, familiar and easy to recall. Imagery works best if engaged through a multi-sensory perspective focusing on senses such as smell, taste, and touch.

Practicing guided imagery

Think of a place that you find comforting. It could be a secluded beach, your bedroom, a quiet mountaintop, or even a loud concert. For 5 to 10 minutes, use all your senses to imagine this setting in great detail. Don't just think fleetingly about this place- really imagine it.



What do you see around you? What do you notice in the distance? Look all around to take in all your surroundings. Look for small details you would usually miss.



What sounds can you hear? Are they soft or loud? Listen closely to everything around you. Keep listening to see if you notice any distant sounds.



What is the flavour like? Are you eating or drinking something enjoyable? How does it taste? Savour all the tastes of the food or drink.



What can you feel? What is the temperature like? Think of how the air feels on your skin, and how your clothes feel on your body. Soak in all these sensations.



What scents are present? Are they strong or faint? What does the air smell like? Take some time to appreciate the scents.

Tips

Preparing your story in advance will make it easier to practice guided imagery.

- Practice guided imagery before your bedtime
- It takes practice to get used to guided imagery
- Don't give up if you didn't get it at your first try.

An experiment

Prepare a unique and individual story that you can use for your guided imagery

Start with your location and its description then gradually add sensory detail...

Deep breathing

Deep breathing is a simple technique that's excellent for managing emotions. Not only is deep breathing effective, it's also discreet and easy to use at any time or place.

Practicing deep breathing

1. Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen
2. Breathe in through your nose, deeply enough that the hand on your abdomen rises
3. Hold the air in your lungs
4. And then exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips puckered as if you are blowing through a straw.

Tips

The secret is to go slow. Time the inhalation (4 seconds), pause (4 seconds), and exhalation (6 seconds). Practice for 3 to 5 minutes.



Helpful apps



Be Mindful (£30.00)

Be Mindful is an online course for reducing stress, depression and anxiety. It guides you through elements of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT). Mindfulness involves paying attention to our thoughts and feelings in a way that increases our ability to manage difficult situations.



Chill Panda (Free)

Chill Panda measures your heart rate, tracks your mood and suggests tasks such as breathing techniques and light exercises to take your mind off your worries.



Sleepio (Free)

Sleepio is an online sleep improvement programme, clinically proven to help you fall asleep faster, stay asleep through the night, and give you more energy during the day. The programme is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. You will learn cognitive techniques to help tackle the racing mind and behavioural strategies to help reset sleeping patterns naturally.



Sleepstation (Free with GP referral)

Sleepstation is a 6-week online course for people who struggle to fall asleep or stay asleep through the night. The course is tailored to your needs, using the information you provide, and gives you access to a team of sleep experts who will offer helpful advice and support throughout.

Key messages

- Good sleep is an essential part of looking after yourself
- Your lifestyle behaviour and sleep preparation can impact your quality of sleep. Making simple changes in these areas can improve your sleep– consider changing something this week
- Relaxation techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and deep breathing can help switch off racing thoughts in the evening, increasing sleep quality
- Start to think about your bedtime schedule/routine. Bed = sleep. Sleep diaries can help with this.

Planning for the future

What are your next steps? What key changes are you going to take forward?

Change 1:

Change 2:



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