

# Sleep

Sleep is so helpful to your mind and body. If you can't get enough sleep either because you are waking early, waking in the night or if you can't get to sleep there are some strategies that can help. Whichever strategy works for you is the best strategy but remember that pressure, neutral warmth are both really calming to your nervous system.

## Sensory Support

### Deep Pressure

-  Massage and/or joint compression prior to sleep (you can use powder or lotion)
-  Use weighted blankets (you might even use horse blankets, and blankets with weights sewn into them)
-  Ankle/wrists weights can help and you wear them in bed
-  Sleep in a sleeping bag. Some people use body pillows or body socks
-  Wear tight PJs to bed (under armour or bike shorts/tight top)
-  Ask someone to squish you with a physio ball – upper back to feet and back again
-  Tuck the cover sheet under the mattress to make the bed very tight
-  Provide back rubs, bear hugs and massage with a towel in a predictable fashion
-  Use the body pillow to create a little valley
-  Try sleeping in a hammock
-  Use compression bands on upper arms, thighs and ankles

### Vestibular

-  Place the mattress on the floor if you don't like heights
-  If you find it difficult to move your head on the pillow, you might feel more relaxed being propped up on pillows.

## Tactile

-  Use PJs with a texture that is more tolerable to you
-  Use sheets/blankets that are really soft – flannel or high count cotton (especially if you have a difficulty regulating sweat and need an absorbent material)
-  Use a soft pillow case
-  Check the seams to ensure that they are covered with a soft material
-  Toss the sheets in the dryer prior to putting them on the bed if you are sensitive to cold sheets and prefer them warmer
-  Cuddle something – small pillow, soft toy
-  Experiment with different types of PJs (tight, stretchy, loose, silky, flannel or cotton PJs)
-  Avoid PJs with lace or built in feet as they might be irritating

## Vision

-  Use neutral colours on the walls
-  Use black out curtains to block the light
-  Use a night light that can defuse shadows
-  Put a tent over your bed to block out the light
-  Avoid looking at electric screens 2h before you get ready and go to bed

## Auditory

-  Use a white noise machine to block out competing sounds or a white noise download from Youtube
-  Employ an air purifier for white noise
-  Play a tape of voices that are familiar and relaxing
-  Play slow and rhythmic music that you love
-  Make a playlist that calms your mind and lets you rest
-  Close the windows
-  Read books in a quiet voice

## Smell



Use a relaxing scent on your pillow (eg familiar perfume, a drop of lavender essential oil)



Put familiar smells in your room

## Other Strategies



Maintain a predictable routine prior to bedtime (eg bath, teeth bed)



Keep consistent items close to your bed that are familiar, comforting and will not entice you to interact



Keep the room organised and clear of clutter



Avoid over-stimulating activities prior to bedtime (gaming, streaming from the Internet, rough and tumble games, loud music, eating)



Use the bathroom before bed



Maintain a visual schedule

## Exercise



Sleep experts recommend exercising at least three hours before bedtime, and the best time is usually late afternoon. Exercising at this time is beneficial because body temperature is related to sleep. Body temperatures rise during exercise and take as long as 6 hours to begin to drop.



A good workout can make you more alert, speed up your metabolism and energize you for the day ahead, but exercise right before bedtime can lead to a poor night's sleep



Because cooler body temperatures are associated with sleep onset, it's important to allow the body time to cool off before sleep.

## Diet



Avoid caffeine



Avoid alcohol



Avoid eating too late (eg after 7pm)

## Wake Up Routine

Having a wake up routine is also part and parcel of a good sleep routine. The main point from sleep advisors is that whatever your night has been like, you need to get up at the same time each morning (unless there are mitigating circumstances eg you are ill.)



7am Set calming relaxing music to begin



7:10am Open curtains to allow light to enter the room gradually



7:20am Rub your joints



7:20am Get up and get dressed

For some people the getting up routine needs to incorporate the trip to school and the school breakfast club. It can help you with the transition between home and school and prepare you for the day in a more relaxed way.

## Mind Games



Talk out worries before your evening meal



Write down a list of worries, rate each of them out of ten depending how worried you are, share your list with a friend/parent/staff member, write down by each worry what you have learnt from sharing the worries and what you intend to think/say/do in order to reduce the worry effect. Re-rate how you feel about the worry. Tell yourself that, "Where there is a problem there is always a solution." Tell yourself, "I have done my best to sort out my worries therefore I can sleep in peace knowing that I have done my best."



Remember that worries are 'thoughts' just like 'I don't like Brussel sprouts' is also a thought. Intend to be firm with your brain if it keeps you worrying. Tell it to stop.



Thought stopping techniques: make a sound (any) and movement (any) eg rub head and pat your tummy to the national anthem. Do them all at the same time. Now try to do it backwards.



Access something that will make you laugh before bedtime eg joke book, Roald Dahl's Revolting Rhymes, comedy track to listen to



Think about good things! Get a note book to write down every single little thing that you like eg certain food, certain weather, a conversation, a smell, memories, future goals/dreams

## **Resources Recommended by**

### **Professionals from Different Disciplines**

- 🌐 Deep Relaxation CD  
Glenn Harrold      Deep Sleep Every Night
- 🌐 App  
White Noise Ambiance for Sleep, Mediation and Yoga
- 🌐 App  
Alarms with tasks to do to turn the alarm off eg Math Alarm Clock
- 🌐 Aromatherapy  
Badger Organic Sleep Balm
- 🌐 Homeopathy  
Rescue Night Dropper
- 🌐 Technology  
Sleep Headphones and Eye Mask
- 🌐 Camomile Tea
- 🌐 Talk about it with your GP or peadiatrician