

Tips for a Good Sleep

Many of us have times in our lives where we find it difficult to sleep at night. I realise that you may already be aware of a number of these strategies, but there may also be one or two tips that are new and helpful to you.

- Try to avoid screens for at least an hour before bed as the blue light devices emit tricks our brains into thinking it's daytime. Avoid late night phone calls too, which might be stimulating.
- Caffeine, alcohol or sugar late at night can also contribute to a wakeful night.
- If possible, keep the same sleep cycle at weekends, as you have in the week.
- Take at least 30 minutes exercise a day, this way you will feel more rested.
- Keep bedroom lights dimmed when you are getting ready for bed. Think dark, quiet, cool (16-18 degrees is recommended).

Meditation and Sleep App's.

Meditation isn't for everyone, but the more you practice it, the more helpful it can be.

You can download the '**Headspace**' app, or try '**The Honest Guys**' who offer a number of sleep 'talk downs', or peaceful sounds to listen to, whether this be natural sounds or gentle music - you can choose what appeals to you most.

"Sleep With Me" is a storytelling podcast designed to help you feel less alone in the middle of the night. You can either tune into what he is saying, or just let his words drift over you.

More Tips!

- Try a camomile tea or warm milk and honey in the evening.
- Lavender drops sprinkled on your pillow at night can help induce relaxation, this also shifts the focus from the mind to your sense of smell.
- Try not to look at the clock at all. The cycle of worrying about sleep can begin here.
- Keep a sleep diary – if something is worrying you or making you angry, keep a notepad and pen by your bed and write it down. Similarly to talking therapy, this can be therapeutic.
- Try to practice, "It's okay not to sleep, so long as I am resting" Accepting sleeplessness and valuing rest can be more helpful than trying to fight it off.

"What you resist, persists" – Carl Jung.

The Cognitive Shuffle – Dr Luc Beaudoin

This technique works by diverting thought, thus tricking the brain into sleep.

When you are settled in bed, think of a random, emotionally neutral word with more than 5 letters, Eg BEDTIME

Take each letter and think of as many objects beginning with that letter and imagine them. So, B might be bat, ball, book, bun etc.

If you happen to get to the end of the word without sleeping, pick a new word.

References

Beaudoin, L. et al., 2019. Research process and sleep app design lessons learned from reflective examination of a sleep study. *Sleep Medicine*, 64(1), pp. 1-342.