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Sleep: Information Hand-out

Sleep has a huge impact upon our well-being and mental health symptoms. Poor sleep can make everything seem more of a challenge so focussing on our sleep quality can make a big difference. There are a number of lifestyle factors that can improve sleep, which are an important place to start. There are then issues such as bedroom factors and sleep routine, which can often make the difference. In addition, there are some specific interventions that can help establish an effective sleep routine. Finally, it can be helpful to think about your personal blocks to sleep, which may relate to your trauma symptoms. The specific management of such symptoms, may also help sleep.

Caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant and will interfere with your ability to sleep. It is not just found in coffee, it is in tea, hot chocolate, chocolate bars, fizzy drinks and painkillers too. It is best to avoid caffeine in the four hours before you go to bed.



Nicotine

Nicotine is bad for your health and bad for your sleep. Again, it is a stimulant and so interferes with your ability to sleep.

Alcohol

Often people think that having a nightcap is a good solution to problems getting to sleep. In fact, research shows that even a moderate amount of alcohol can affect your sleep quality. Also, alcohol can make you dehydrated, so may wake you up due to thirst or needing to wee. Try and avoid drinking alcohol in the four hours before you go to bed.



Exercise

Generally, exercising and being physically fit leads to better sleep 20-30 minutes for 5-5 days a week is a really good idea. It is important to exercise at the right time of day, exercising just before bed is not a good idea because it wakes up your nervous system and makes it harder to sleep.

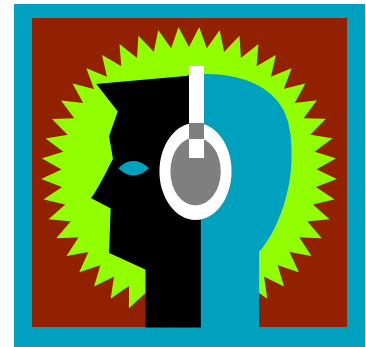
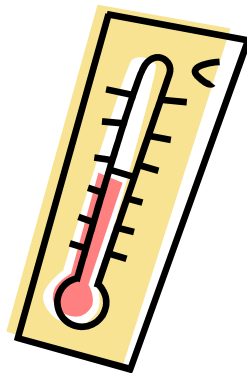


Diet

Going to bed hungry or after a large meal can cause sleep difficulties. A light snack before you go to bed might be helpful. Make sure you go to bed hydrated so you don't wake up in the night due to thirst.



our ability to
1
bedroom is
too hot, try opening a window. If it's too
cold, think about having an extra blanket.
Poor sleepers tend to report feeling hotter
than good sleepers. Avoid having a very
hot bath just before going to bed.



Limit noise

Unexpected noises will wake you from even
a deep sleep e.g. a baby crying, car alarm or
telephone,. However, more on-going noises
associated with living in the city tend to
cause fewer problems as we get used to them
over time. Try to remove any sounds that
might interfere with your sleep e.g. you
might want to turn off your mobile phone.



Bed comfort

In order to sleep well you need to be
comfortable. If your mattress or
pillows are old and uncomfortable,
then try and change them. If you
can't afford to change your mattress
turning it over or rotating it might
help. Or you could add a supporting
board under the mattress.

Limit light

Too much light can affect our ability
to sleep. You may need thicker
curtains or, if you work shifts, blinds.



Clock watching

Checking the time only
produces restlessness and
makes it harder to get to sleep.
Try turning the clock away
from you!

Improve air quality

Try to keep a window open. Stuffy
air can cause uncomfortable sleep

Sleep routine

Our body has a natural daily rhythm. Think about how we get hungry before meal times!
There are many daily physical processes that tell our body what to do and when to do it.

Sleep relies on these rhythms as much as eating relies on us becoming hungry at the right time.

Think about jet lag – our body is not used to going to bed and getting up at such a different



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Associating the bedroom with sleep (Stimulus control)

Helpful associations / Healthy Sleeping Pattern



Bedroom + Sleepy feelings



Non-bedroom + Awake fee



Unhelpful associations

Associations that need to be corrected



Bedroom + Awake feelings





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(lead to night-time wakefulness)



Non-bedroom + Sleepy feeling

(lead to daytime sleepiness)



Associating the bedroom with sleep (Stimulus control)

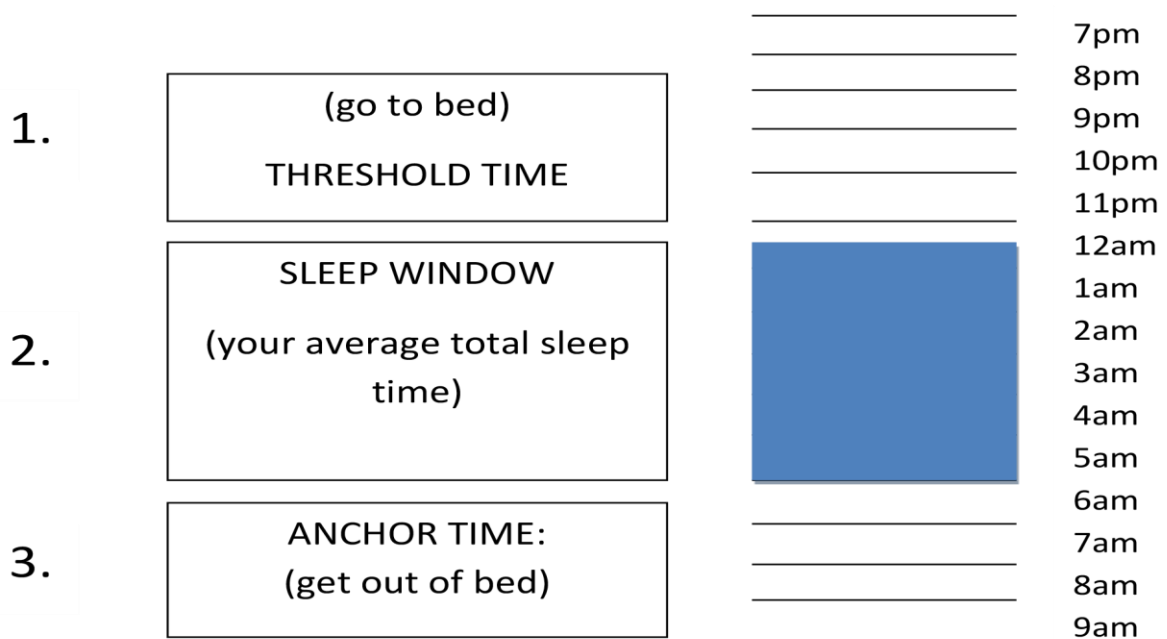
1. Lie down in bed only when you feel sleepy
2. Only use your bed for sleeping
3. No napping in the day
4. Stop wakeful activities before bed time – use a bedtime ‘wind-down’



Sleep efficiency and sleep restriction

Spend less time in bed to:

- Give greater control over sleep
- Regulate sleep-wake cycle
- 'knit-together' patches of sleep



1. Only go to bed once you've crossed your **THRESHOLD TIME**
2. Limit time in bed to your **SLEEP WINDOW**
3. Get up every morning at your **ANCHOR TIME**

As your sleep efficiency improves you can let yourself stay in bed longer

Adjusting the sleep window:

- If you sleep for more than **90%** of your sleep window – lengthen the window
- If you sleep for **80-90%** of your sleep window – keep it the same
- If you sleep for less than **80%** of your sleep window – shorten the window