

Sleep Advice

What is normal sleep?

- The American Thoracic Society suggests that the optimal sleep duration in adults is 7-9 hours
- The normal time it usually takes to fall asleep is less than 30 minutes

Tips for improving sleep

The sleep environment

- Maintain a comfortable temperature in the bedroom
 - The bedroom shouldn't be too bright. Bright light including 'blue light' through electronic devices should be avoided around bedtime – ideally for 2 hours prior
 - Avoid watching the clock!

Sleep schedule

- Go to bed when you are sleepy
 - Try to go to bed & get up at around the same time each day
 - Avoid napping in the day

Limiting caffeine, nicotine & alcohol

- Avoid caffeine after midday
 - Avoid alcohol, nicotine & large meals within 2 hours of going to bed. (People sometimes drink alcohol to try to help them get to sleep, but it damages the quality of sleep)

Exercise

- Overall exercise is beneficial for sleep
- However, avoid exercising within 4 hours of bedtime as this can be too stimulating

Relaxation

- It is obviously easier to fall asleep when you are relaxed, but it is not always easy!
- Simple things include having a bath or reading a (relaxing) book
- Progressive relaxation & visualisation techniques can be helpful (see overleaf)

Useful resources

- NHS Every Mind Matters – help with sleeping
https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc_id=Sleep&gclid=EAlalQobChMIqoH-6KPe8wIVkbbICh1taQRpEAAAYASAAEgKJ7_D_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds
- Mental health foundation free podcast for progressive relaxation:
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos/wellbeing-and-sleep-full-works>
- Techniques including progressive relaxation & visualisation:
<https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/resource-library/relaxation-techniques/>

We hope some of these tips will be useful. Sleep can be affected by several factors, including anxiety, depression, and physical pain. Management of these issues may help sleep quality.

Tips adapted from NICE Insomnia CKS (March 2021)



**This leaflet is available in large print
and other formats and languages.**

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