

Getting better sleep



Understanding Sleeping Problems

- Sleep is an essential part of our wellbeing.
- It is common to not sleep properly for a night or two. This could be due to excitement, worry or being ill.
- Not sleeping for several days or weeks can affect our ability to cope day to day.
- 1 in 4 experience sleep difficulties. So having a problem sleeping at some point in your life is very common.



How much sleep do we need?

- It is a myth that we need 7-8 hours of sleep a night.
- The amount of sleep needed varies throughout your life-span and between people.
- It is important to work out what is the right amount of sleep for you.



Sleep Process

- Sleep is not like pressing a switch on and off. It has different stages.

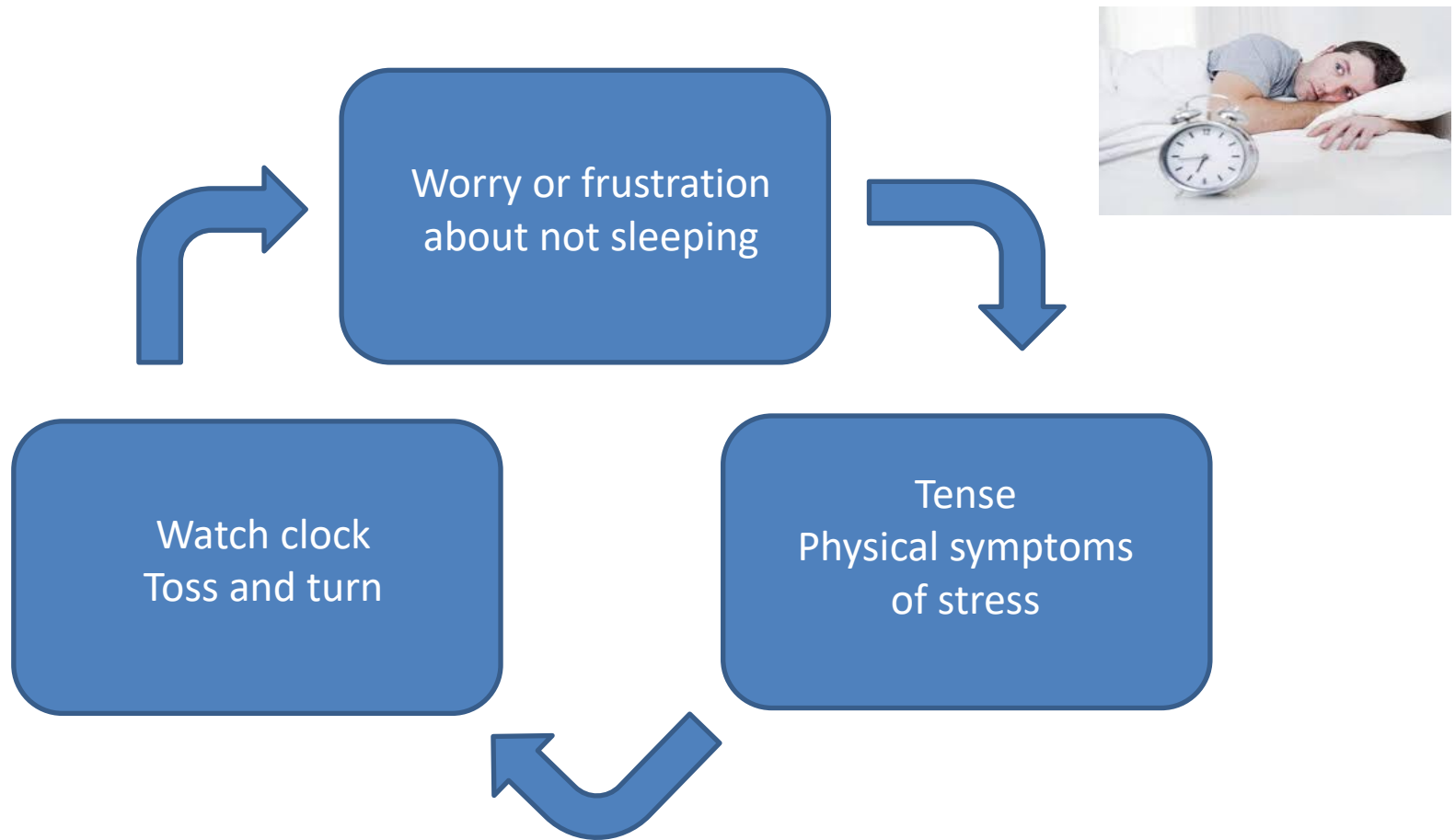
Rapid Eye Movement (REM)

Stage 1 - Light Sleep

Stage 2 - Deeper Sleep

Stage 3 - Deepest Sleep

Vicious cycle of sleep problems





Tips for a restful nights sleep

Sleep Routine



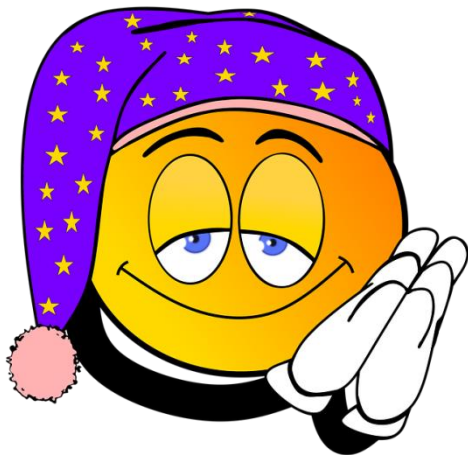
Bedtime Routine

- Have a wind down period before bed to allow your body and mind to start relaxing.
- Example of a routine: warm bath, pyjamas, cup of herbal night time tea, listen to relaxation music until sleepy and go to bed.



Sleepy

- Only go to bed when you are sleepy.
- Do not force yourself to go to bed at a set time because you will only lie awake.
- Try not to nap in the day, then your body will be more tired when it is bedtime.



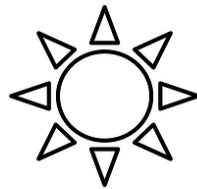
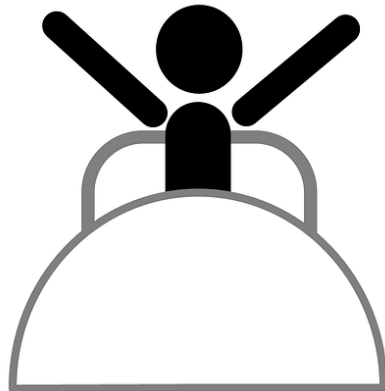
20 minute rule

- If you cannot fall asleep after 20 minutes get out of bed and do a different task such as listening to calm music, have a warm decaffeinated drink.
- Return to bed when you feel sleepy.



Fixed Waking Time

- Get up at the same time everyday
- This will help your body to get into a regular sleep rhythm.



Exercise

- Exercising for 30 minutes three times a week can help improve sleep. This includes walking and running.
- Best time to exercise is late afternoon or early evening.
- If you exercise less than 2 hours before bedtime it can interfere with sleep.



Sleep Environment



A Comfortable Sleep Environment

- Comfortable bedding
- Supportive mattress
- Temperature of room – not too hot or cold.
- Minimize noise
- Block out light



Bed is for Sleeping only

- It is suggested that bed is just for sleeping or sex.
- Bed is not for watching TV, playing games or studying. This is because it stimulates your mind and stops you sleeping.



No Technology

- Phones or laptops in bed can stop you sleeping because the bright lights and task can be stimulating.

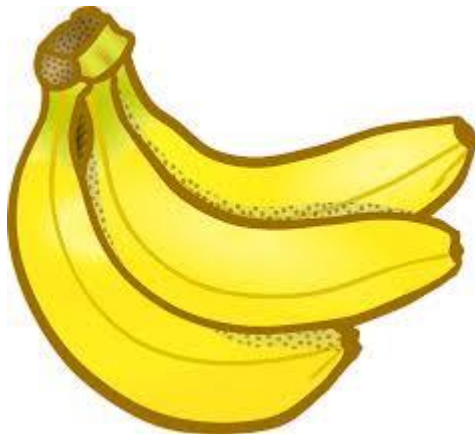


Food and Drink



Have a Snack

- Heavy meals too close to bed can disrupt sleep.
- A healthy light snack such as warm glass of milk or a banana can help improve sleep. Try to avoid heavy, spicy or sugary foods



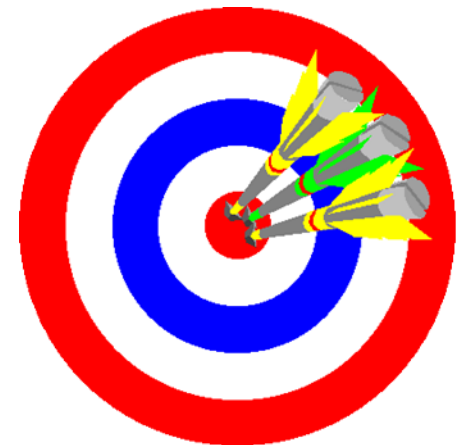
Stimulants

- Try to have your last cigarette, caffeinated drink or alcoholic beverage at least 4 hours before bed.
- This is because they are stimulants and can interfere with getting a good night's sleep.



Trouble shooting

- Everyone is different and has different sleeping patterns, so some of these tips might not work for you.
- You may need to persist for a couple of weeks before you see the benefit.



Take Home Message

- By making some small changes to our daily routine we can get our sleep back on track.



Next Steps

- Try some of these tips for a few weeks to see whether you can improve your sleep

All worksheets and a PDF are freely available at
<https://www.talkplus.org.uk>