

## Getting to sleep at night



Worry, and life in general, can negatively impact on the time and quality of sleep. Disturbed sleep can impact on a range of psychological processes including concentration and memory, as well as making us feel miserable and low in mood. While a good night's sleep is always a good thing, it's not always easy to achieve.

Here are a few tips to help you achieve your sleeping goals. None are perfect or the complete answer, but try to find the combination of strategies that suit you.



Use the relaxation exercises from the relaxation leaflet if you wake up or before you go to sleep. It may help to practice these relaxation exercises during the day.



If a warm bath helps you relax, make sure you take it 1-2 hours before you intend to go to bed. This allows your body temperature to drop, which will make you feel sleepy.



Use the meditation exercise in the 'Coping with worries: meditation and mindfulness' leaflet, if you wake up or before you go to sleep. As with relaxation, it may help to practice these meditation exercises during the day.



Make sure that you do not 'lie in' in the morning (especially on weekends) - it may be tempting, but it will delay you getting to sleep the following night. We sleep better when we establish a routine of going to sleep and getting up.



Wind down during the evening before going to bed - don't do exercise, drink caffeinated drinks in the evenings such as coffee, tea, coke, etc.



Try and get a lot of natural light (go outside) in the morning and keep the lights dim in the evening. This will help your body clock to distinguish between night and day.



Put the day to rest by making a list of things that happened during the day, or any plans for the next day. That way you don't have to worry about these things when you are in bed at night.



Don't go to bed too early in an attempt to have more time available to sleep. We are not designed to sleep earlier than we are used to, and the likelihood is you will simply toss and turn and not get to sleep. Try to go to bed when you are feeling sleepy.



Do some exercise or keep as busy as possible during the day - regular exercise and activity are strongly associated with good sleeping patterns.



If you wake during the night or cannot sleep for 10-15 minutes after going to bed, stop actively trying to get to sleep. Read a book (either in bed or in a comfortable chair) or some other activity that is relaxing and requires concentration until you feel drowsy. Then try again.