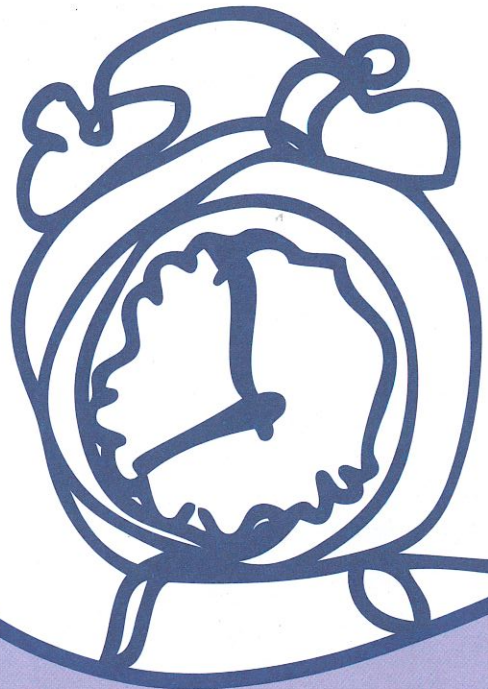


# Sleep

## A short guide



Includes two week sleep diary

# About this guide

This leaflet is a short version of our tips and ideas to help you get good sleep. Remember, you might need to try a few different things before you find what works for you.

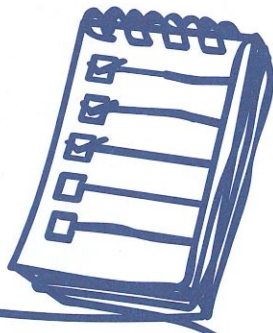
We've also included a two week sleep diary, so you can record information about your sleep habits. If you have problems sleeping, this can help you understand what might be affecting your sleep.

There's a close relationship between sleep and mental health. Living with a mental health problem can affect how well you sleep, and poor sleep can have a negative impact on your mental health. You can access our more detailed information on sleep at [www.mind.org.uk/sleep](http://www.mind.org.uk/sleep)

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**Sometimes the methods that I've used before to help me sleep won't work as well, and that's OK, things change. You just need to try different things until you find what works again.**

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# Tips and ideas to try

## Establish a routine

Try to establish a regular sleeping pattern by going to bed and waking up at roughly the same time every day.

## Relax before you go to bed

You may find a relaxation routine can help you prepare for sleep. There are several things you can try:

- ◆ **Do something calming** – such as listening to relaxing music, or having a bath.
- ◆ **Breathing exercises** – in a comfortable position, try this: breathe into your belly (not your chest) then out through your nose, making your out-breath longer than your in-breath; repeat until you feel relaxed.
- ◆ **Muscle relaxation** – consciously tense and relax your muscles, one after the other, starting with your toes and working up your body until you reach the top of your head.
- ◆ **Visualisation** – picture a scene or landscape that has pleasant memories for you.
- ◆ **Meditation** – you can learn meditation techniques at a class or from self-help guides; many people also find mindfulness helpful.

## Make sure where you sleep is comfortable

You may want to experiment with the temperature, light and noise levels to work out what works best for you. On the whole, dark, quiet and cool environments generally make it easier to sleep.

## Try to resolve stresses and worries

Try to identify anything in your life that's causing you stress or worry that might be affecting your sleep. You may find it helpful to talk to a friend about the feelings that affect your sleep, or write them down.

## Check for a physical cause

- ♦ Pain, illness or other unknown physical problems can disturb your sleep.
- ♦ Visit your GP to investigate potential causes and get help with treating them.
- ♦ Talk to your partner: snoring, preferred side of the bed and other common issues can often disturb sleep and can be resolved.

## Ask about treatment options

You might want to talk to your doctor or a mental health professional about what you're experiencing and the treatment options available, such as talking treatments, medication and sleep clinics.

## Food, drink and exercise

Caffeine, alcohol and sugary foods may give short-term help but they can all disturb your sleep patterns. Doing regular physical activity can also help you sleep, as it makes you more physically tired – particularly if you exercise outdoors. This doesn't have to be strenuous exercise – any activity, such as housework, gardening or going for a walk, can help.

## Medication

Many drugs, particularly common ones for mental health problems, can affect your sleep. If this is the case, talk to your GP to discuss alternatives.

## Give yourself some tech-free time

Use of bright screens on laptops and phones in the evening has been shown to negatively affect sleep. Try to give yourself some tech-free time an hour or so before bed, to help yourself prepare for sleep.

## Keep a sleep diary

You may find it difficult to work out what's affecting your sleep. A sleep diary involves recording information about your sleep habits to help you understand your sleep problem and what's affecting it.

**We've included a 2 week sleep diary overleaf for you to try out, and we've left some fields blank so you can include the information you find most useful.**

If you want to, you can show it to professionals you're working with, so you can work together to understand the problem you're having.

You might want to include information about:

- what time you go to bed and what time you get up
- total number of hours of sleep
- overall quality of sleep, ranked 1–5
- how many times you wake up in the night, how long you are awake and what you do while you are awake
- whether you have nightmares, night terrors or sleep paralysis, or have sleepwalked during the night
- whether you sleep during the day, and for how long
- any medication you're taking, including dose and what time you take it
- the amount of caffeine, alcohol or nicotine you have
- the amount of physical activity you do
- what you eat and drink
- your general feelings and moods, including any anxious and repetitive thoughts.



Week 1

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

I went to  
bed at...

I woke up  
at...

Notes:

Week 2

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

I went to  
bed at...

I woke up  
at...

Notes:

We're Mind, the mental health charity for England and Wales. We believe no one should have to face a mental health problem alone.

We're here for you. Today. Now. We're on your doorstep, on the end of a phone or online. Whether you're stressed, depressed or in crisis. We'll listen, give you advice, support and fight your corner. And we'll push for a better deal and respect for everyone experiencing a mental health problem.

## Contact our Infoline

 Call: 0300 123 3393

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