

## The Good Sleep Guide

### Develop A Regular Sleep Pattern

- Go to bed only when sleepy. Do not use the bedroom for anything but sleep (or intimacy).
- Set the alarm for the same time every morning for seven days a week, at least until your sleep pattern settles down.
- Get up at the same time every day, even if you did not fall asleep until late.
- Do not sleep during the day.



### Look After Yourself

- Try to keep yourself fit by doing light exercise in the late afternoon or early evening (later than this can disturb your sleep).
- Avoid caffeine after noon.
- Avoid nicotine, alcohol, exercise and big meals within 2 hours of bedtime.
- Reduce the amount of caffeine you drink, such as coffee, tea and some soft drinks. Try decaffeinated milk-based or herbal drinks. Consider complete elimination of caffeine from your diet.
- Only have a light snack for supper.
- Keep your sleep for bedtime, avoid falling asleep or snoozing in the chair.



### During The Evening

- Put the day 'to rest'. Think it through and use a notebook if needed. Tie up 'loose ends' in your mind and plan ahead.
- Have a regular routine before sleep, wind down during the course of the evening and avoid anything that is mentally demanding within 90 minutes of bedtime.



## At Bedtime



- Go to bed when you are 'sleepy tired' and not before.
- Do not read or watch TV in bed.
- Turn the lights off when you get into bed.
- Relax and tell yourself that 'sleep will come when it's ready'. Enjoy relaxing even if you don't fall asleep at first.
- Do not try to fall asleep. Sleep cannot be switched on deliberately, but trying to do so may switch it off!

## If You Have Problems Getting To Sleep

- Make sure your bed is comfortable and the bedroom is not too cold or too warm and is quiet (use earplugs if necessary).
- Try not to get upset or frustrated as sleep problems are quite common and they are not as damaging as you might think.
- If you are awake in bed for more than 20-30 minutes, get up and go into another room.
- Do something relaxing for a while and don't worry about tomorrow. Read, watch television or listen to quiet music and after a while you should feel tired enough to go to bed again.
- If not asleep within 20-30 minutes of returning to bed, repeat.
- Remember that people usually cope quite well even after a sleepless night. Only return to bed when you feel 'sleepy tired'.
- Developing a good sleep pattern may take a few weeks, however, you should remain confident that you **will** achieve it by working through this guide .
- Do not drink alcohol to help you sleep. It may help you fall asleep, but you will almost certainly wake up during the night.



More information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>

You will find a mental wellbeing audio guide on overcoming sleep problems here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>

*Adapted from All Wales Medicines Strategy Group: Educational Pack: Material to Support Appropriate Prescribing of Hypnotics and Anxiolytics across Wales by Wigan Borough CCG, with permission and thanks*