



stresscontrol

Face your fears; be more active; watch what you drink

Step 9

Controlling your sleep

Poor sleep and stress go hand in hand. You don't sleep well because you are stressed: you don't recharge your battery so you are less able to fight stress. **Step 9** teaches you how to get a good night's sleep and so be able to fight stress better the next day.

“I can go to bed at night feeling dog tired but as soon as that light goes out, my mind comes to life. I can't shut it down and get to sleep. I toss and turn and feel rotten. Joe is fast asleep in seconds and I'm wide awake”

“I wake up at two in the morning with a load of stupid thoughts going round and round in my head. I just get up and I spend half the night in the living room. I can't tell you how lonely I feel then. And of course, during the day, I am walking about like a half-asleep all the time”

“I'm quite down just now and I find that I'm awake at 4 in the morning. And that's me for the rest of the night. I'll not get over again even though I want to sleep more”

“I have to take a few drinks to get me over to sleep. But I wake up within a few hours and that might be me for hours”

“I wake up and feel that I've hardly slept. I still feel tired and don't feel I've got the energy to face the day”

These are all quotes from people who have a sleep problem.

Reasons for poor sleep

Sleep problems can come about for a range of reasons. Tick the ones that apply to you:

Stress

You may find that you are better as long as you can keep busy and distracted. When you go to bed, a host of thoughts or worries can invade your mind. This stops you from sleeping.

Shift work

This can badly affect sleep as your body can't get into a good sleep habit.

Age

As we get older, we need less sleep yet often try to sleep for the same number of hours as we needed when we were younger.

Need to go to the toilet

This is often tied to age. Most people over 60 get up at least once a night

Pain

Any illness that results in pain can cause poor sleep

Surrounds

Sleep can be poor if you live in a noisy street or if the neighbours are playing music till all hours. Your room and bed may also play a part.

We will look at ways to overcome some of these later.

Sleep problems and stress often go hand in hand. There are four main types. You may find you have more than one. Tick the ones that fit your sleep:

Getting over to sleep

You may feel dog tired when you get ready for bed. But as soon as you get into bed, you can't get over to sleep. You are restless. You toss and turn. Your body may be tired but your mind is not. Your mind bursts into life and you can't switch off. You get more and more annoyed and stressed.

Staying asleep

You may wake up at different times of the night. You may find it hard to get back over to sleep.

Waking too early in the morning

You find yourself waking at 4am or 5am and know that you are not going to get any more sleep even though you want to.

Sleep quality

You feel that you don't get a good night's sleep. You may feel you don't get into a deep sleep. You may feel restless during the night. You do not feel refreshed by your sleep.

What happens when we sleep

Sleep is made up of 5 stages. When we first fall asleep, we go into **Stage 1** sleep. This is very light sleep.

As you go into **Stage 2** and **Stage 3**, your sleep gets deeper.

By **Stage 4**, you are in a very deep sleep.

You then go into a stage called Rapid Eye Movement (**REM**) sleep. This is when most of our dreams occur. (You will only remember your dreams if you wake up during this stage).

Once REM sleep is over, you go back to Stage 1 sleep. You go through this cycle about 4 or 5 times each night.

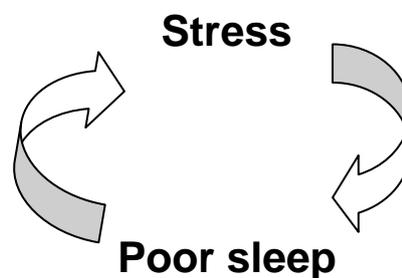
As you get older, you seem to need less deep sleep. This may be one of the reasons why older people tend to wake more often during the night.

A lack of REM and Deep sleep can badly affect you during the day.

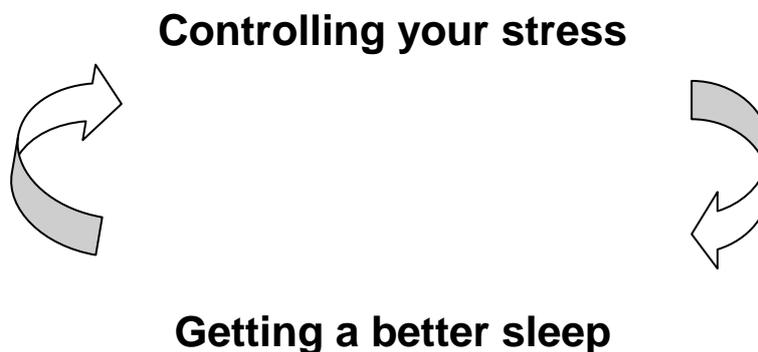
Daytime effects of poor sleep

You need to sleep to recharge your batteries - both body and mind. If you don't do this then you will drag yourself through the day. You may feel like a half-shut knife. You may feel tired, lethargic, irritable, less vigilant, take longer to react, make more mistakes, have poor concentration and poor memory. You just don't feel 'with it'. If your sleep is poor for some time, you will find it much harder to learn new tasks.

You may have a vicious circle - stress may cause you to sleep poorly, poor sleep causes more stress and so on....



Controlling stress should help improve your sleep. You can also improve your stress by controlling your sleeping problems. This is a positive circle. The next section will show you how to do this.



Getting a good nights sleep

This handout will teach you how to assess and then treat your sleep problem. You will learn to do this in 4 steps:

STEP 1: know your enemy

STEP 2: relaxation

STEP 3: retraining your sleeping

STEP 4: sleeping tips

STEP 1

Know your enemy

You will find diary forms at the back of this handout. Each form lasts for 4 nights and asks you 7 questions:

- 1. When did you try to go to sleep?**
2. How long did it take you to fall asleep?
- 3. How often did you wake up last night?**
4. How long did it take you to get back to sleep each time?
- 5. When did you wake?**
6. When did you get up?
- 7. How was your sleep last night?**

Fill them out each morning for at least three weeks. This will help you know your enemy better. In turn, you will find it easier to know exactly what the problem is and how best to fight it.

The Diary will also let you track your progress while using the techniques.

STEP 2

Relaxation

Use either your relaxation tape or Breathing Retraining. The Breathing should be used as described in that handout.

Follow these four stages if using the tape:

First stage

Learn to relax during the day (see '**Controlling your Body**' handout).

Second stage

Once you feel tired, go into bed and play the tape in bed. Use Side 1: 'Deep Relaxation'

Third stage

Move onto Rapid Relaxation when you feel ready

Fourth stage

Try to get to sleep by relaxing yourself without using the tape

STEP 3

Retraining your sleeping

This is a very good way to get rid of the bad habits that can keep poor sleep going. It is hard to do but well worth it in the end.

You must follow this approach to the letter. There are six stages:

STAGE 1: Don't go to bed until you feel sleepy

Only go to bed once you start to feel sleepy. Don't go to bed because the others are going to bed, or you feel bored or because it is 'bed-time'. You must stay up until you feel tired no matter how long this takes.

STAGE 2: Your bedroom is only for sleeping

This step gets rid of the things that keep you from sleep. While reading a book seems like a good idea, it is not. If you are reading, you are not sleeping, so it must go. So you should not read, watch TV, listen to the radio, write letters, phone friends, etc. This does not include sex. Sex can help relax you and may help you get over to sleep.

As soon as you get into bed, put the light out and try to sleep. Though you may know good sleepers who read in bed or watch TV, you must do these things outside the bedroom at least until you get on top of the problems.

STAGE 3: If you don't fall asleep in 25 minutes, get up

If you are not asleep in 25 minutes, you may not be asleep in 50. So after 25 minutes, go back to the living room. Don't watch TV. Don't eat or drink. Read a magazine, listen to relaxing music. You must stay in the living room until you feel tired again ***no matter how long this takes***. When you feel sleepy, go back to bed.

At the start, you will be up many times each night. It is hard to get out of a warm bed but you must do this.

STAGE 4: Repeat (and repeat and repeat)

Repeat step 3 again and again if you have to. So you have 25 minutes each time to get over. If you don't - it's back to the living room.

STAGE 5: Get up early each morning

Get up no later than 8.30am. Set the alarm and as soon as it goes off, get up and out the bedroom.

Even if you feel that you have hardly slept a wink, you must follow this to the letter. You should also try to do this seven days a week, i.e. no lie-ins at the weekend until you get this problem sorted out.

STAGE 6: Don't try to catch up on sleep

You may want to nap during the day to catch up on lost sleep, e.g. after a meal. ***Don't do it.*** Save the sleep for bedtime.

Work out when you most want to sleep during the day. Then work out a way of dealing with this - go out for a walk, phone a friend, etc.

KEEP AT IT

This is a very good approach but it is also a hard one to follow. It makes great demands on you. It is very tempting to stay in bed after 25 minutes, to have a long lie or to have an afternoon nap because you can hardly keep your eyes open. Fight these urges the whole way.

Don't expect rapid change. Your poor sleep may have built up over a long time. So it will take time to get better.

To help you along the way, the next few pages offer tips to help your sleep:

STEP 4

Sleeping tips

Your bedroom

Make sure the bed and room are warm. If your bed is past its best and if you can afford it, think about getting a new one. The same goes for your pillows. Are the curtains heavy enough to keep the room dark.

Noise

It might be hard to stop noise from outside the house. Make sure you control as much noise inside the house as you can.

Your partner

If your partner snores or is restless, ask if he or she could move to another room if you have one until you start to sleep better. **He or she** must move - not you - as you must learn to sleep well in your own bed.

Exercise

Exercise can help you sleep better. Do this in the morning, afternoon or early evening. Don't do it in the three hours before bed. A brisk walk for 20-30 minutes is as good as anything.

Relax before bed

Try to slow down in the hour before going to bed. Have a hot bath, listen to music, read a book. If you work on the back-shift or are studying for exams, don't go straight to bed from your work. Give yourself time to switch off. Try to build up a relaxed routine

Caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant. You get it in tea, coffee, fizzy drinks, energy drinks and tablets, some headache tablets and pain killers. Try to cut down your caffeine intake across the day. Try to cut out as much as you can in the later afternoon and evening.

Smoking

Nicotine, like caffeine, is a stimulant. Don't smoke in the three hours before bedtime. Never smoke during the night if you wake up. If you are a heavy smoker, you would be best to give it up. Ask your GP for help.

Alcohol

If you rely on a night-cap to get over to sleep, you must stop this now. It may well get you over to sleep. But as the alcohol level in your blood drops, it will wake you again in 2-4 hours. It will then be hard to get over to sleep again. It also disrupts sleep rhythms and cuts down your REM and deep sleep. Alcohol may keep stress alive and this, in turn, helps keep your sleep poor.

Warm milky drinks

The old wives were right! Ovaltine, Horlicks or warm milk may help you get more deep sleep. Drink these instead of tea and coffee at night.

Food

Try not to eat for about two hours before going to bed. Your body starts to work to digest the food. You want it to be slowing down. If you are hungry, take a very light snack. Try not to eat during the night if you wake up.

Drink

Try to drink as little as you can in the evening. This may stop you from waking to go to the toilet during the night.

Your sleeping needs

Most of us sleep around 7-8 hours each night. On the whole, we need less sleep as we grow older. Yet older people still try to sleep 7-8 hours. This may explain why many older people wake up in the latter parts of sleep. The amount of sleep also depends on your life-style. If you have young children who keep you on the go all day, you may need more sleep. If you are not active during the day, you may need less. Some people seem to thrive on only 4 hours a night.

So you have to find your own level. This may mean changing habits such as going to bed at the same time each night.

Start to get a grip on your sleep by filling out the sleep diary first thing each morning. Keep filling them in as you use these ideas. You will then be able to see your progress.

Last words

The aim of Step 9 has been to get you a good night's sleep. Once you are doing this, you will find that you have more energy to fight stress during the day.

Stress Control: Sleep diary

When did you try to go to sleep?	How long did it take you to fall asleep?	How often did you wake during the night?	How long did it take to get over to sleep each time?	When did you wake?	When did you get up?	How was your sleep last night?
<u>EXAMPLE</u> 10.45	85 minutes	twice	1) 25 min 2) 60 min	7.15	8am	usual - was restless and getting angry with myself. Didn't feel rested at all when I woke. Couldn't stop thinking about work.
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Night 2						
Night 3						
Night 4						
Night 5						

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