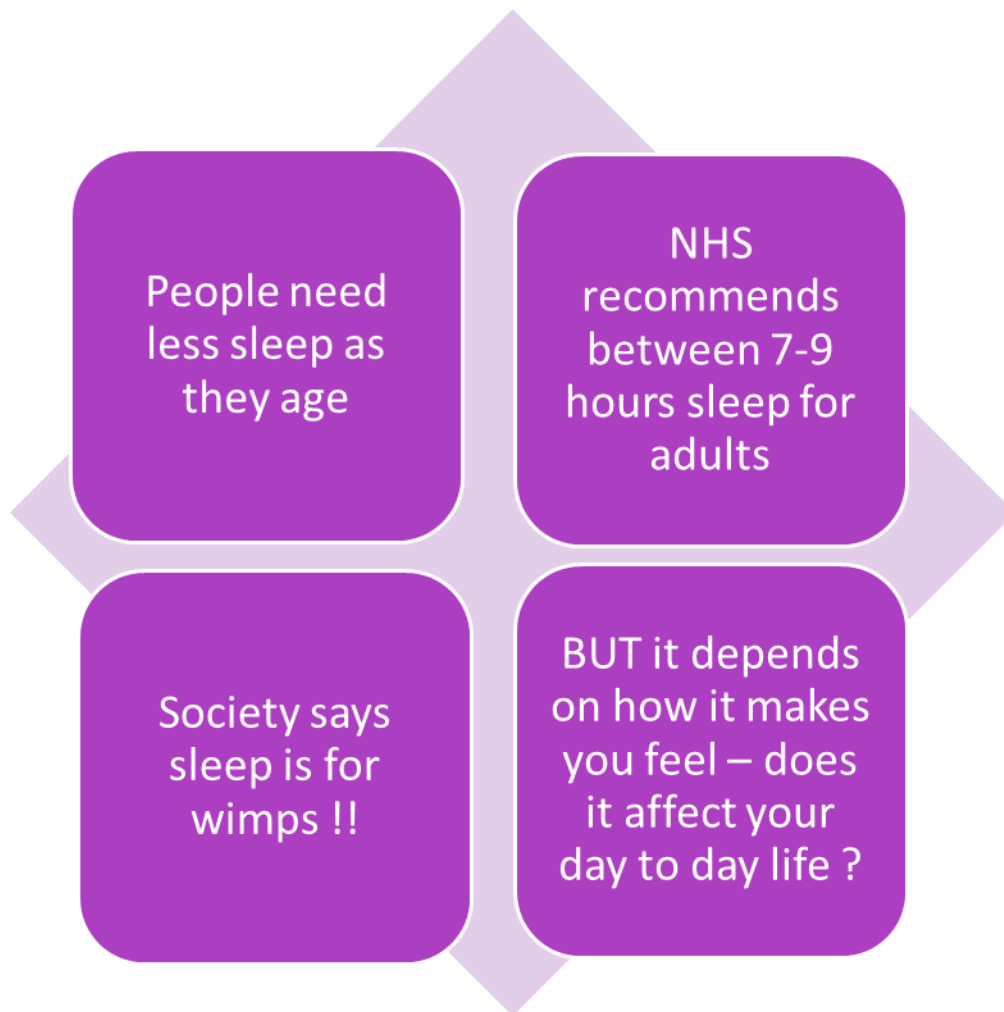




A Good Night's Sleep



Insomnia is very common - it is thought to affect one in three people in the UK

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/insomnia>

What stops us sleeping well ? Here are some examples.



Worry

When we have things on our mind, it can be difficult to switch off those thoughts and relax enough to sleep



Coffee

Caffeine is a stimulant. It blocks the substance that your body produces to promote sleepiness and keeps you from feeling sleepy. Caffeine begins to affect your body very quickly.



Noise

Noise can stop us getting to sleep, or wake us up abruptly. It is believed that noise can disturb our sleep even if it doesn't wake us up.



Light

Too much light in the environment can make it difficult to sleep. The brain interprets the bluewave light from screens such as phones and other devices as daylight, which can disrupt our internal body clock.



Pain

Chronic pain can make it hard for us to get to sleep, or it can wake us up in the night. It might make sleep harder because we are worried about our pain, or the pain makes it harder to do the things that will help us sleep



Your Medication

Some medication can affect our sleep as a side effect. If you think this is the case **it is important that you do not stop or change how you take your medication without discussing it with your doctor first**



Shift work

Shift work can mean that we are trying to sleep during the day when it is light. This disrupts our body's internal clock and makes it difficult to feel sleepy when we need to. Our bodies adjust to it which makes it difficult to go back to our normal routine.



Sleep disorders

Sleep disorders are medical conditions that disturb our sleep, such as sleep apnoea and narcolepsy. You should see your doctor if you think you have a sleep disorder.

What are the benefits of a good night's sleep ?



Alertness

Sleep is important for helping us to stay alert and avoid our brains feeling foggy. When we feel tired, we often find it harder to stay on top of things and do what we enjoy



Concentration

When we have slept well we find it easier to concentrate and not get distracted. This helps us get things done, which can make us feel better about ourselves.



Memory

It is thought that sleep is important for consolidating and strengthening new memories, so sleeping well helps us to be less forgetful



Supports our immune system

Recent evidence suggests that sleeping well supports different parts of the immune system and helps you fight off infection



Emotional health improves mood

Sleep can directly affect our mood and make us feel more rested, but it can indirectly affect our mood by making it less difficult to engage with the things we enjoy



Supports our physical wellbeing

Evidence shows that sleeping well has a positive effect on things like blood pressure and helps prevent conditions such as heart disease and diabetes



Helps maintain weight

Evidence shows that people who get more than 7 hours of sleep tend to be less prone to putting on weight



Supports our mental health

Sleep boosts our mental wellbeing. People who slept better were less likely to have anxiety or depression



Poor sleep can have a knock on effect on our mental health, but our mental health can also have an impact on how we sleep, so we can feel as if we are in a vicious circle.

Sometimes our sleep can be the canary in the coal mine, our first indication that our mental health is not in a good place.

"My sleep was the first red flag that started waving wildly to warn me that something was wrong."

Three areas to look at for Sleep Hygiene



Sleep environment

Do you need to make any changes to where you sleep so that it promotes getting a good night's rest ?



Lifestyle

Does our lifestyle promote a good night's sleep ?



Habits and routines

Do we have healthy habits and routines when it comes to sleep ?

How we can optimise our bedroom for sleep ?



NOISE

Can you try earplugs ?



LIGHT

Blackout blinds can block out external light



TEMPERATURE

Cooler rooms are usually better for sleep. The NHS suggests between 18 and 24 degrees centigrade.



COMFORT

Are your pillows and mattress right for you ?



CLOCKS

Try moving your clock out of sight. This can help with clockwatching when you cannot sleep



SCREENS

Phone screens give off blue light, which your brain interprets as daylight. If you have to have your phone in the bedroom, try putting it out of reach

Three top tips for your bedroom

Keep	the bedroom for sleep !
Don't	use your bedroom as your study/dining room/living room/workplace if you can
Do	get out of bed and go and do something relaxing if you are tossing and turning

What lifestyle factors can I look at ?



CAFFEINE

Caffeine is a stimulant - it actively blocks the hormones that make you sleepy from entering your cells



NICOTINE



ALCOHOL

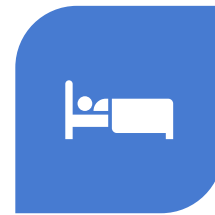


EXERCISE

Try and exercise in natural daylight as this helps regulate your internal clock



EATING LATE AT NIGHT



GOING TO BED WHEN YOU FEEL TIRED



AVOID SCREENS BEFORE BED

Screens emit blue light which your brain thinks is daylight

When should I stop ?

Lifestyle factor	Time before bed
Caffeine	7 hours
Strenuous exercise	Late afternoon
Main meal	4 hours
Screens	1-2 hours

These are suggestions for the **University of Michigan sleep centre**. They may seem quite a challenge at first, but they give us something to aim for. We don't have to cut things out all at once and can do it in stages

Predictability supports good sleep



Routine is very important in good sleep



Trains our brains in expecting to sleep



Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day



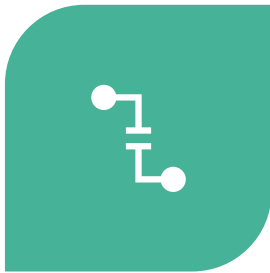
Even at the weekends !!

Build a bedtime routine



Establishing a routine makes our brain realise we are preparing to sleep. We emphasise bedtime routines for children, but not for ourselves !!

ESTABLISH A WIND DOWN
ROUTINE BEFORE BED



Not only does disconnecting from screens help us keep our body clock in sync, but it disconnects us from activities like social media that can over-stimulate us and keep our minds active.

DISCONNECT FROM SOCIAL
MEDIA, SCREENS AND
ANYTHING TOO STIMULATING



Planning to do something relaxing before we go to bed can help us from becoming over-stimulated just before we try to sleep

DO SOMETHING YOU FIND
RELAXING IN THE LAST HOUR
BEFORE BED

Some examples of helpful things to do to relax



READ A BOOK



WATCH TV



LISTEN TO A PODCAST



TAKE A BATH



LISTEN TO MUSIC



WRITE DOWN YOUR
WORRIES/MAKE A
PLAN



CRAFT – KNITTING,
CROCHET,
COLOURING



MINDFUL MEDITATION
BREATHING
RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

What about when we don't sleep well ?



- Bear in mind how lack of sleep affects you
- Pace what you are doing
- Choose to do activities requiring concentration when most alert
- Driving
- Avoiding naps unless absolutely necessary



References and further reading

Sleep and Tiredness : <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/>

Sleeping Problems :

<https://web.nrw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/leaflets/Sleeping%20Problems.pdf>

Sleep and our Mental Health : <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/sleep-problems/about-sleep-and-mental-health/>

NHS 10 tips to sleep well : <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/10-tips-to-beat-insomnia/>

Tips from Mind <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/sleep-problems/tips-to-improve-your-sleep/#collapse3b375>