



Establish a regular sleep pattern

- 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.

During the evening

- Ensure you 'put the day to rest'. Think it through and use a notebook if necessary. Tie up "loose ends" in your mind and plan ahead.
- Try to keep yourself fit by performing light exercise in the late afternoon or early evening (later than this can disturb your sleep).
- Have a regular routine before sleep, whereby you wind down during the course of the evening and avoid anything that is mentally demanding within 90 minutes of bedtime.
- Keep your sleep for bedtime (i.e. avoid falling asleep or snoozing in the armchair).
- Do not drink too much caffeinated substances (e.g. coffee, tea and certain soft drinks) and only have a light snack for supper. Try decaffeinated milk-based or herbal beverages.
- Do not drink alcohol to aid your sleep. It may help you fall asleep, but you will almost certainly wake up during the night.
- Make sure your bed is comfortable and the bedroom is not too cold (but not too warm) and is quiet (use earplugs if necessary).

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 attempting to do so may switch it off!

If you have problems getting to sleep

- 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 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.
- Remember that people usually cope quite well even after a sleepless night. Only return to bed when you feel "sleepy tired".
- Establishing a good sleep pattern may take a number of weeks; however, you should remain confident that you *will* achieve it by working through this guide.

**Adapted with the kind permission of the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group Educational Pack: Material to Support Appropriate Prescribing of Hypnotics and Anxiolytics across Wales.*

Other Practical Tips

- **Avoid using smart phones or other devices which emit 'blue light' late in the evening/night as this can disrupt normal sleep schedules.**
- **Do not use your phone as an alarm clock; use a separate alarm clock.**
- **If you need to use your phone as an alarm clock, place your phone away from sight or at the other end of the room during the night.**