

Lesson 6

Sleep Longer and Deeper with Proven Techniques

Introduction

There are many ways to ensure you catch your sleep and stay asleep even when you are an insomniac.

It's a fight that many have, and some people struggle with both, but there are ways around nearly every single sleep blocker.

Wear ear plugs or sleep in a different place if there is a snorer in your house.

Introduce a fan or even air conditioning if the bedroom's too warm in the summer.

Invest in heavy curtains, a black out blind, or eye mask if your bedroom is lit up by a streetlamp or other light source.

Schedule a 'worry' journal for earlier in the day to process your thoughts if you have an overactive mind and are worrying at bedtime. Mindfulness can help with this too.

The science

There are many reasons why you might be waking up in the night.

Pain is a key factor in whether you sleep through the night and less sleep can make you experience the pain as worse. It is vital therefore that you get your pain under control with advice from your General Medical Practitioner or local pain management team.

Consuming too much alcohol or coffee also increases the risk of you staying asleep. Reducing your alcohol use and consumption of caffeine-filled products hours before bedtime stops you from needing to visit the toilet in the middle of your sleep.

Studies show that going to bed and rising at the same time every day for at least a few weeks can help reset your Circadian Rhythm and allow you to sleep at around the same time as other people in your world.

Stress, anxiety and depression can wake you in the night, as can Restless Legs Syndrome and night terrors.

One thing that people find useful is getting up if after 20 minutes of waking they are still struggling to get back to sleep. Doing something relaxing, such as listening to gentle music or reading can help you feel sleepy, and it is at this point it's good to go back to bed and try to get back to sleep.

Why this helps

Mental well-being and sleep are closely related, one affecting the other.

Isn't it worthwhile therefore to prioritise both as best you can?

The good news is that there are plenty of things you can do to help improve your sleep, as you have read about on this course.

Video

Put clocks in your bedroom out of sight. Clock-watching causes stress and makes it harder to go back to sleep if you wake up during the night.

Get regular exercise. But keep in mind, exercising too close to bedtime may interfere with sleep.

If you wake up and can't fall back to sleep within 20 minutes or so, get out of bed. Go to another room and read or do other quiet activities until you feel sleepy.

Sleep story.

What have you learnt?

There can be many reasons why you cannot stay asleep. Finding yours is the first step to an unbroken night in your sleep sanctuary.

This is the last lesson of the **Sleep Better – Feel Great** course. If you have found it helpful, please share with someone you know, or if you have any comments, please get in touch.

Happy sleeping!