

The Sleep Workbook

Sleep is an essential function of the human body. We need it in order to be happy and healthy. When we sleep our body gets time to rest and repair and the mind gets a chance to do its filing. Promoting and prioritizing your sleep is the best possible form of self-care available to us.

Workshop Part 1

How to look after your sleep.

1) Prioritize it

It is easy to put sleep at the bottom of the priority list. We have lives full of distractions and it can be easy to get to bed late and just hope for an 'off switch' to take us into sleep. Let's change this and learn how to prioritize sleep.

How many hours sleep do you think is ideal for you? Think back to when you have felt your sleep has been good. How much sleep were you getting? If you were to wake up naturally without an alarm, how many hours sleep would you have had? For most people this is between 6 and 8 hours.

The ideal amount of sleep for me is _____

Be sure to respect your own needs here. They may be different to your partner, family members and friends.

Now, think about what time you want or need to get up on the average morning. This might be the time that the alarm goes off for work or it might be the time you would like to get up to exercise before work or to get organized for the day.

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The time I need to get up is _____

Now, count back the ideal number of hours sleep you need from the time you need to get up. This gives you the time you need to be aiming to go to sleep.

The time I need to aim to go to sleep is _____

Now factor in an hour for wind down time before you go to sleep - this could be for reading, watching TV, having a bath or anything else that makes you feel relaxed and calm.

Wind down time needs to start at _____

What things might prevent you from doing this at the moment? How can you change this?

What habits do you need to break? For example, surfing the internet, watching too much TV.

What habits or structures do you need to put in place in order to make sure you can get to bed at the time you have identified? (eg, eat a little earlier, watch one TV program per night instead of three)

2) Support the body's process

Your body inherently knows how to sleep well and get the rest it needs. To maximize this natural ability, we just need to support it by creating a good environment through our surroundings and the actions we take.

Allow your body chemistry to prepare you for sleep. Melatonin is a naturally occurring substance in the body which is there to transition us into sleep. We can encourage the production of melatonin by having some calm, wind down time in the evening. This involves only doing activities that are calm, relaxed and comfortable, thus allowing all the adrenalin from the day to disperse and a tired and sleepy feeling to take over instead.

What will you do as part of your wind down time? It doesn't have to be the same every night. What activities make you feel relaxed?

Support your natural body chemistry even further by making sure that caffeine is kept to a minimum and you stop drinking it mid-afternoon at the latest. Also make sure there is a gap (preferably a few hours) between finishing exercising and going to bed in order to give your body time to come down from the adrenalin.

Is there anything you need to adjust to support your natural body chemistry? _____

Next, think about your sleep space...how do you feel in your bedroom? What could you do to make your bedroom feel more like a relaxing haven? What areas of your bedroom do you need to declutter for it to feel more peaceful?

3) Create strong boundaries

Firm boundaries are essential when it comes to maximizing your sleep as this helps to protect your mind from wandering thoughts and distractions.

Fix in your mindset that between the hours you have identified to be asleep, nothing is as important as your sleep. You refuse to allow anything to interfere with your good quality sleep during that time.

How and where will you empty your head before you go to bed? (eg, on a to do list, in your diary, as a note in your phone). Find a system that works for you and use it every night.

Use these statements to remind yourself of your boundaries for night time.

- This is not for now
- The day is done
- There is nothing else for me to do now but sleep

Workshop Part 2

Protecting your sleep during the menopause

Insomnia during the menopause is a symptom due to changing hormones, therefore it is secondary insomnia.

Checklist to protect your sleep

- Stay in bed even if you are awake - you could read a book or listen to a relaxation audio if you need to but ideally just lie there, relax and rest.
- Manage your mind - notice your mind trying to be busy but do not get involved with the thoughts, just let them pass. Expect thoughts to come like 'what if I can't get to sleep' or 'I must get to sleep now otherwise I won't be able to cope tomorrow'. These are insomnia thoughts - they are normal but it is important that you do not pay much attention to them.
- Maintain a good wind down routine before bed
- Be kind to yourself and reduce the pressures on yourself as far as possible
- Speak to yourself in a calm and reassuring way.

Workshop Part 3

Insomnia

Insomnia is:

- Struggling to get to sleep or struggling to stay asleep
- The problem has gone on longer than a couple of weeks
- It is having an impact on your life

Insomnia can come in many different forms. Your sleep may follow patterns or it may feel completely random. You may have good spells and bad spells of sleep. You may only have issues in certain places or sleeping next to another person. You may know what triggered the insomnia or you may not.

There is some basic sleep hygiene advice that you should make sure you are following:

- No caffeine after 2pm
- Have a 2 hour gap between exercise and going to bed
- Limit your exposure to screens just before bed
- Make sure to have wind down time before bed

This sleep hygiene advice is low level so if you have true insomnia it is often not enough to get your sleep back on track.

Emma's approach is much more detailed, designed to be the right level of intervention for the severity of the issue.

My SAFE model involves

- Sleep Education (Knowledge is power)
- Adrenalin Reset (Get your body chemistry working to promote sleep again)
- Freeing Your Mind (Ensure your mind is not interfering at night)
- Ecology Check (Make sure your sleep fits into the content of your life).

These steps, taken in the right order, in a joined up manner allow you to press the 'Reset button' on your sleep.

I am yet to meet anyone who does not have enough melatonin, you just have to press the reset button to make sure your melatonin is able to be dominant.

If you think you might be suffering with insomnia, or are struggling with your sleep go to www.sleepseekers.academy to find out how Emma can help you to get the sleep you need.