Getting better sleep

Good sleep is essential for good health and wellbeing. With around a third of adults having trouble sleeping at some point in their lives, Good Thinking, London's digital mental wellbeing service, has created this short guide and a longer workbook to help you get better sleep.

Three common questions

1. How do I know if I have sleep problems?

Common problems include finding it hard to fall asleep, struggling to stay asleep and waking very early in the morning. If your symptoms are present for at least three nights a week for three months or more, this is known as chronic insomnia.
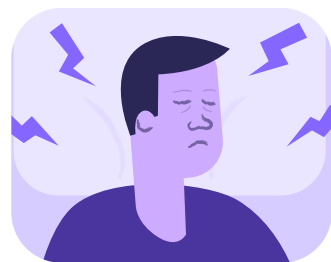
Find out more on pages 6-11 of the Good Thinking sleep workbook

2. How much sleep do I need?

This varies from person to person and depends on factors such as your age, gender and daily activities. As a general rule, an adult needs 7-8 hours sleep and an older adult needs 6-6.5 hours sleep plus daytime naps.

**Check out pages 12-19 of the Good Thinking sleep workbook**

3. How can I improve my sleep?

Making small changes to your lifestyle and bedtime routine can make a big difference to your sleep. This includes eating a healthy diet and switching off any tech devices before bed. You might also like to try meditation or another relaxation technique in the evening.

Learn more in various sections of the Good Thinking sleep workbook

Night shifts, newborns, noisy neighbourhoods… your sleep will be influenced by different external factors at different times in your life. Try to maintain a consistent sleep routine where possible – this might include avoiding caffeine before bedtime, taking naps when you can and soundproofing your bedroom.
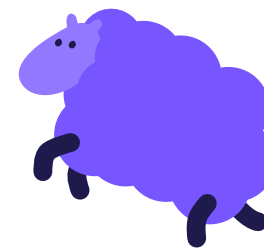
Three top tips

1. Keep a sleep diary

A sleep diary can help you to identify patterns and problems with your sleep. Each day, you should note down e.g. the time it took to fall asleep, how many times you woke during the night and how long you slept in total.

Print off the sleep diary on page 52 of the Good Thinking sleep workbook or take some notes on your phone

2. Have a good bedtime routine

Your body and brain need to receive helpful signals for sleep. You should aim to finish any work or household chores early in the evening and you might then like to read a book or listen to some music to help you wind down.

Write your own version of the bedtime routine on page 25 of the Good Thinking sleep workbook
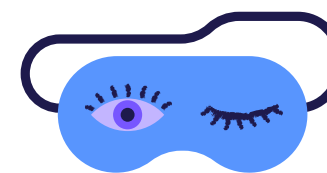
3. Improve your sleep hygiene

Your lifestyle habits, sleep environment and readiness for sleep can help or hinder sleep. Consider how you can make small changes, such as exercising regularly and making sure your bedroom is dark, quiet and the right temperature.

Use the sleep hygiene checklist on page 24 of the Good Thinking sleep workbook

Sleep is highly regarded in many cultures, faiths and religions and often mentioned in sacred texts and scriptures. To help improve your sleep, you might like to refer to the guidance within your own faith (e.g. preparing your bed for sleep, sleeping in a certain direction and taking daytime naps during religious festivals that disrupt your usual sleep routine).