



# Wellbeing with Fatigue

Booklet for Participants

Session Nine. Improving sleep.

**steps2wellbeing**  
Southampton & Dorset

# Action Plan

- Review of home practice
- Understanding Sleep
- Sleep Diary
- Sleep hygiene
- Changing thoughts about sleep
- Relaxation
- Pro-Sleep Schedule
- Sleep Restriction
- Home Practice

## Questions?

Do you have any questions from last week's session?



## Home Practice Review

How did your home practice go? Did you achieve your goals?

What did you learn from your home practice?

# Fatigue and Sleep

**I FEEL LIKE I'M ALREADY  
TIRED TOMORROW**



## **Important Things to Know About Fatigue and Sleep**

When we struggle with fatigue, we feel tired all the time

Fatigue is not always the same as sleepiness, but some people with long-term fatigue issues will have poor sleep.

Even if we have had many hours of sleep, we may not feel refreshed.

People with fatigue have sleep difficulties among other symptoms. These can include finding it hard to get to sleep, waking up often during the night and/or waking up too early in the morning. Having a bad night of sleep can make it harder to remember things. It can also be harder to focus on tasks and increases moodiness or irritability. Poor sleep can also increase sensitivity to pain. For people with fatigue difficulties, poor sleep can make the feelings of being fatigued even worse. It can help to obtain as much sleep as possible.

To improve sleep we need to make it a priority. If we don't prioritise sleep and recognise its importance it will always come second to other things.

## What is Sleep?

Sleep consists of two distinct states that alternates in cycles and reflects differing levels of brain activity. There are Non-REM (NREM) sleep and REM sleep. Every night, your brain switches from REM and Non-REM sleep. During a normal night's sleep, everyone progresses through these stages five or six times. Each stage last approximately 90 minutes.

Sleep science has developed significantly in the past 20 years, providing growing insight about how sleep works, why it's important, the ways that it can be disrupted and the means it can be restored. In this session we will cover the basic information about sleep and consider ways in which you can take more control over your sleep regime and other factors that can help you improve your sleep.

### The Basics

We can't do without sleep. Sleep is vital to our emotional and physical wellbeing; it is not simply the absence of wakefulness.

Sleep restores and recuperates our tissues and allows our muscles to recover. During sleep new proteins are synthesised and hormones are produced.

Sleep is like the ultimate therapy for our brains too. It improves memory, motor task proficiency ("muscle memory"), and creativity. REM sleep connects your different memories, experiences and skills to create new ideas and insights.

REM-sleep and dreams can reduce pain from traumatic events, helps us decode facial expressions accurately, and improve problem-solving and creativity.

### *Sleep loss*

A lack of sleep affects our physical health; some research indicates that poor sleep increases the risk a number of diseases, from cancer to diabetes, and coronary heart diseases.

Sleep loss affects our mental health leading to inattention, memory problems, fatigue, and disorientation.

A lack of sleep also affects our emotional health; it can make us irritable, over-anxious and depressed in mood.

## What controls sleep?

Have you ever noticed that you feel more alert at certain times of day, and feel more tired at other times? Those patterns are a result of two body systems; sleep/wake homeostasis and your circadian rhythm or internal body clock. These systems control your body's need for sleep.

### Non-rapid eye movement (NREM)

sleep is characterized by deep, slow brainwaves that're 10 times slower than when you're awake. During deep NREM sleep, we experience a sensory blackout, and our cortex (the logical centre of our brain) is relaxed. Your entire brain is now fully aligned to cleanse and transfer selected memories from your short-term memory (in your frontal lobes) to your long-term memory (at the back of your brain).

There are three stages of progression: Stage 1 light sleep, Stage 2 true sleep, Stage 3 to 4 deep slow-wave or delta sleep.



### Rapid eye movement (REM)

sleep is distinguished by faster brainwave activity that's similar to when you're awake. Your brain's visual, motor, memory and emotional centres are activated, and pockets of feelings, memories, motivations are combined into a giant movie screen, i.e. your dreams. Your eyes may move rapidly as you dream.



When we're awake, we continuously receive new sensory inputs from the environment. NREM sleep strengthens and stores those raw data and skills. REM sleep incorporates these ingredients by connecting them with one another and with our past experiences and knowledge, to improve our understanding about world, develop new insights and resolve problems creatively.

## Sleep/wake homeostasis

This system balances our need for sleep, called a “sleep drive” or “sleep pressure,” with our need for wakefulness. When we’ve been awake for a long period of time, our sleep drive tells us that it’s time to sleep. As we sleep, we regain homeostasis and our sleep drive reduces. Finally, our need for alertness grows, telling us that it’s time to wake up.



## The Circadian Rhythm

This system is your internal body clock that runs in an approximate 24-hour cycle. It’s regulated by melatonin, which is produced by the suprachiasmatic nucleus in the brain, which regulates your body clock using the amount of light.

Most people’s internal body clock roughly follows the patterns of the sun.

## SLEEP MYTHS

Many adults need 5 or less hours of sleep

It does not matter when you sleep, as long as you sleep enough hours

Your body gets used to getting less sleep

Napping makes up for a lack of sleep at night



# Sleep Diary

**To get the most from this program, we would suggest that you keep a sleep diary to keep track of your sleeping pattern.**

Every day for at least 6 weeks, you should record relevant sleep-related information.

Here is what you may choose to include in your sleep diary to learn more about your sleep habits.

What time did you wake up and get up this morning?

- What time did you go to bed last night?
- How long did it take you to get to fall asleep?
- How many times did you wake up in the night?
- How long were you awake during the night?
- How long did you sleep altogether?
- How well rested do you feel this morning? On a scale of 0-10, 0= not at all, 10 = very good.



## Daily Sleep Diary Example

Complete each morning ("Day 1" will be your first morning.) Don't worry too much about giving exact answers, an estimate will do.

	Enter the week day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	What time did you wake up and get up this morning?							
2	What time did you go to bed last night?							
3	How long did it take you to get to fall asleep?							
4	How many times did you wake up in the night?							
5	How long were you awake during the night?							
6	How long did you sleep altogether?							
7	How well rested do you feel this morning? On a scale of 0-10, 0= not at all, 10 = very good.							





Take a break.  
**You deserve it!**



# Tips for better sleep

## Sleep hygiene

Paying attention to sleep hygiene is one of the most straightforward ways that we can set ourselves up for better sleep. Strong sleep hygiene means having both a bedroom environment and daily routines that promote uninterrupted sleep.

### Your Lifestyle

Restrict energy-boosters activities to day time and keep them well out of the bedtime

Exercise before dinner time

Avoid caffeine and other stimulants in the hours before sleep (4-6 hours)

Eat light meals and schedule dinner 4 hours before bedtime

Do not drink alcohol before going to bed

### Your Bedroom

Use your bed for sleeping and sexual activity only

Don't watch TV or use electronic devises they emit blue light which mimics daylight and can fool our internal body clock

Keep your bedroom relatively cool

Make sure your bed is comfortable

### ***Key Pro-Sleep Strategies***

*Learn to challenge your negative thoughts about sleep*

*Learn to relax*

*Establish Pro-Bed Schedule*

*Restrict your sleep*

# Thoughts and Sleep

## Change Thoughts about Sleep

Sleeping problems are frustrating, but negative thoughts towards them will not change them. In this section, we are going to look how we can challenge these negative thoughts and beliefs about sleep.

Long-term conditions, such as chronic issues with fatigue can produce a whole range of feelings, both positive and negative. Our feelings and emotions produce certain types of thinking, and vice versa.

### Common negative thoughts about sleep

*"I haven't slept all night, so I can't do anything today."*

*"I can't cope without sleep."*

*There is nothing that will help me out."*

### What can we do with negative thinking?

- **Recognise** our negative thought. We cannot change something, if we were not even aware of it. *"I haven't had any sleep, so I can't do anything today."*
- **Notice how this makes us feel** – annoyed, anxious.
- **Challenge the thought.**

- Remind self that these thoughts are just thoughts, they are not facts and we don't have to accept them. We can question or challenge our thoughts.
- If we can't stop your mind from churning or worrying while lying in bed, it a good idea look for evidence whether our thoughts are valid and supported by the facts at all.
- Ask if our thoughts are helpful or realistic? If not, let's try to develop more helpful ways of thinking about whatever it is going on. It doesn't mean always being positive, the secret here is balancing realistic with helpful. We can ask ourselves: How can I think about this situation in a way that is honest and realistic, but also helpful and constructive?



***“Although it feels like I haven’t had any sleep, in reality I probably have had some sleep if I look in my sleep diary. I know that even if I had not slept at all, I still can do something today. I just need to pace myself.”***

It would be beneficial to take a little time and write down the thoughts in a notebook and begin to challenge them. Let's look at the example below.

Thought diary

Situation	Feelings & Physical sensations (rate your emotions 0-100)	Negative/Unhelpful Thought	Alternative, realistic, and helpful and balanced perspective	Re-rate your Feelings
Lying in bed in the morning	Annoyed 80% Anxious 90% Tired	“I haven’t had any sleep, so I can’t do anything today.”	Although it feels like I haven’t had any sleep, in reality I probably have had some sleep if I look in my sleep diary. I know that even if I had not slept at all, I still can do something today. I just need to pace myself.	Annoyed 40% Anxious 30%



# Relaxation

## Learn to relax

Learning to relax or meditate is so important for good sleep. Relaxation and meditation strategies can provide physical and psychological benefits, and can calm our body and mind and prepare us for a good night sleep. There are many ways we can practise relaxation and mediation, and there are many great free apps for downloading to our smartphones. Relaxation practice should not be carried out in bed but earlier in the evening or even during the day so that the routine becomes second nature once in bed.

### The Three Minute Breathing Space

1. Attend to what is. The first step invites attending broadly to one's experience, noting it, but without the need to change what is being observed.
2. Focus on the breath. The second step narrows the field of attention to a single, pointed focus on the breath in the body.
3. Attend to the body. The third step widens attention again to include the body as a whole and any sensations that are present.

<https://soundcloud.com/hachetteaudiouk/meditation-8-the-three-minute-breathing-space> (free to download) Mark Williams  
"Mindfulness. Finding Peace in a Frantic World."

### Yoga Nidra

Yoga nidra, sometimes known as a bedtime yoga, is a great tool for sleep meditation. This yoga offers a very deep relaxation, and research shows that a regular practice can activate the parasympathetic nervous system and increase the amount of alpha-waves in the brain.

Yoga nidra is often performed lying down. The practice often starts with a positive affirmation which is repeated in the beginning and end of the meditation (e.g. I'm calm and relaxed.)

During the practice, people focus on their breathing and centre their attention on different parts of their body.

[https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/content/uploads/2017/06/F\\_03\\_Yoga-Nidra.mp3](https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/content/uploads/2017/06/F_03_Yoga-Nidra.mp3)



# Pro-Bed Schedule

A good pro-bed schedule consists of a wind-down routine, staying active during a day & avoiding naps and restricting non-sleep friendly activities in the bedroom. It helps re-establish a balance in our homeostatic system that is responsible for regulating sleep.

## Homeostatic System

Sleep/wake homeostasis balances our need for sleep, called a “sleep drive” or “sleep pressure,” with our need for wakefulness. When we’ve been awake for a long period of time, our sleep drive tells us that it’s time to sleep. As we sleep, we regain homeostasis and our sleep drive diminishes. Finally, our need for alertness grows, telling us that it’s time to wake up.

Napping during the day uses our sleep drive at the wrong time reducing the natural sleep pressure later at night.

## Pro-Sleep Schedule

- Stay awake and energised during the day
- Restrict sleep to night-time (do your best to avoid naps; if you feel sleepy during the day, take some exercise, drink tea or coffee, go outside.) If you categorically need to take a nap, restrict it to 10 minutes only.
- Create a wind-down routine
  1. Set aside time each evening to relax before heading to bed, ideally this would be 1 -2 hrs
  2. Pick out activities that you enjoy, and that are relaxing in a passive way, e.g. reading, going for a stroll or listening to music.
  3. Practice yoga nidra
  4. As soon as you get into bed, immediately turn out light and put your head on the pillow as it is your intention to sleep.



## Sleep restriction

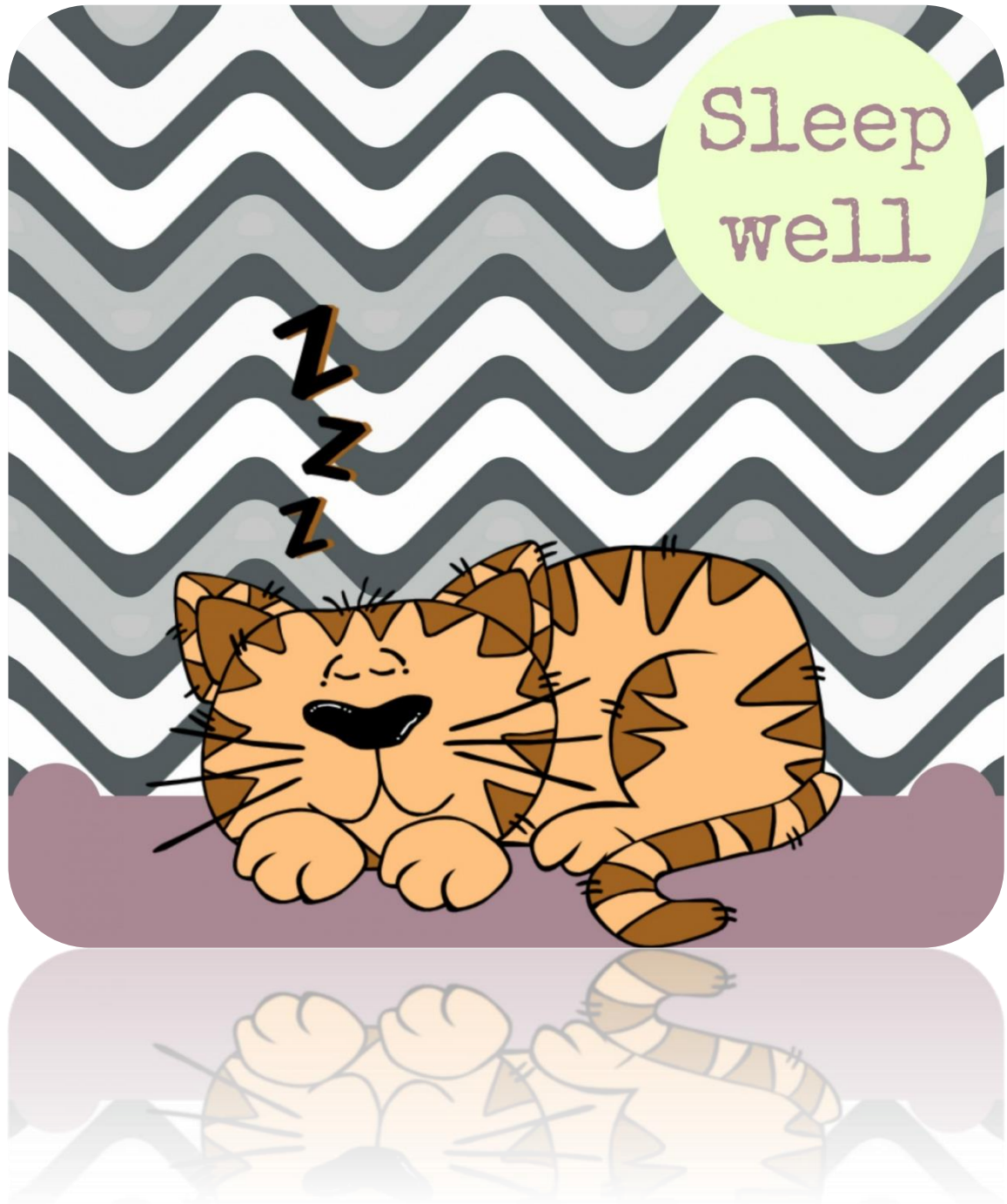
**Sleep restriction is the most powerful technique pro-sleep techniques, but it can also be the most challenging to implement.**

It is designed to eliminate prolonged middle of the night awakenings. It doesn't aim to restrict actual sleep time but rather to initially restrict the time spent in bed. Subsequent steps consist of gradually increasing the time spent in bed. The initial time in bed is usually the average nightly total sleep time over the last week.

1. **Average the Hours of Sleep per Night** – Using your sleep log, find the average number of hours of nightly sleep.
2. **Set Your Bedtime** – Start by going to bed in time to achieve only the average number of hours that you calculated. For example, if you usually only sleep 6 hours, and you need to wake up at 7:00 am, then your initial bedtime should be 1:00 am. It is recommended, however, that you do not restrict the sleep time less than 5.5 hours even if that is more than your average sleep time.
3. **Maintain the Same Wake Time** – Keep the same wake time every day of the week.
4. **Stick to this Schedule for at Least Two Weeks** – The time spent in bed should not vary according to the amount of sleep you got during the night either.
5. **Increase the Time Spent in Bed** – When you are sleeping relatively well through the night and starting to feel tired during the day, gradually increase the time spent in bed. Move back your bedtime by adding 15 minutes each week.
6. **Find Your Ideal Bedtime** – You will know that you have reached your ideal bedtime when you are sleeping better through the night and feeling rested during the day.
7. **If you can't fall back to sleep after approximately 15 to 20 minutes, get out of bed.** After 20 minutes of wakefulness, get up and leave your bedroom.

Don't spend time in bed trying to fall asleep. You'll probably worry about not falling asleep and then learn to associate the bedroom with not sleeping well.

8. **Find an uninteresting activity.** Read something uninteresting. Listen to relaxing music. When you start to feel drowsy, go back to bed.







# Over to You: Choose and Practice

## Summary Session Nine

In this session we looked at practical ways that might improve your sleep. We discussed sleep hygiene, pro-sleep schedule and sleep restriction. We learned to challenge our negative sleep-related thoughts and explored pro-sleep benefits of relaxation and yoga nidra.

**Write down one or more key points that you have learnt today**

## Suggested Home Practice

You may find useful to read this handbook, reflect upon your thoughts and the psychological techniques discussed

Consider keeping Sleep Diary

Make a list of all the things you would like to practice over the next week and beyond.