

Pointers for helping with sleep

- Keep a regular sleep and wake time. Try to adhere to this every day.
- Do not exercise within two hours of bedtime.
- Sleep in a dark (sleep mask can help), quiet room (ear plugs can help) at a cool temperature.
- Only go to bed when you are sleepy. If you cannot fall asleep within 20-30 minutes, get out of bed and do a quiet activity elsewhere and then return to bed.
- Some people may find a large meal within two hours of bedtime may affect their sleep.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol four to six hours before bedtime.
- No TV/DVD/Playstation/X-box in the bedroom. Turn mobile phones off.
- Do not attempt to nap early in the evening. The forbidden zone for sleep is 1 to 3 hours before bedtime.
- Some experts suggest a wind-down ritual to help promote more relaxed sleep, which might consist of some of the following:

Warm Bath	Progressive muscular relaxation	Soft Music	Relaxation Exercises
Meditation	Diaphragmatic Breathing	Reading 30 minutes prior to bedtime	Dim your lights in the evening

- Write down any thoughts that keep popping into your head or things you are worrying about in a notebook kept next to your bed and deal with them in the morning.
- Remind yourself that sleep will come naturally, simply lying there is giving your body a chance to rest and recover, lack of sleep is not as damaging as your might think, as long as your body is getting the rest it needs. Focus on the relaxation.

It may be quite hard at first to implement some of these behaviours, but is important to stick with it and you will begin to see the benefits. Remember that habits are hard to form, as they are to break, so put each hint into practice at least 10 consecutive nights before discounting it.