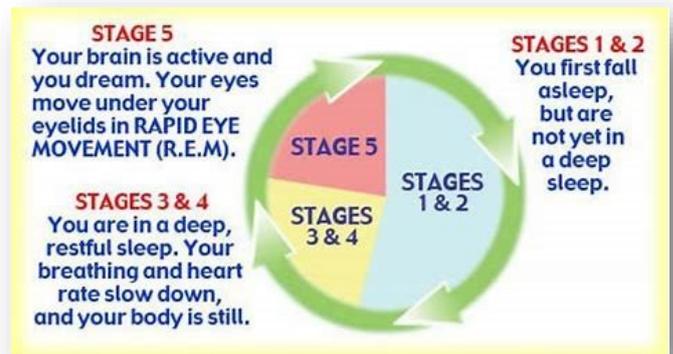


## Sleep Issues..... WHAT YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE IT!

Sleep problems can happen to people of all ages but are more common in people who are in their mid to late stages of life. Women are more likely to develop sleep problems, but they are also experienced by men. At least 1 in 10 people suffer from sleep problems on a regular basis and it is estimated that 25% of the population experience sleep problems occasionally.

### WHAT HAPPENS DURING SLEEP?

It is estimated that we go through the 5 stages of sleep 4–5 times a night and that each sleep cycle lasts for roughly 90 minutes. People who suffer from sleep problems spend less of their sleep cycle in Stage 4 and the REM stage of sleep, meaning that they are not getting the deepest levels of sleep.



### HOW MUCH SLEEP IS ENOUGH?

How many clouds are in the sky? On average, people sleep between 7–9 hours a night. This does not mean that everyone must be sleeping between 7–9 hours or that if they don't it means they have problems with too little sleep. Each person will find a level of sleep that is enough for them to wake up, feel refreshed and not feel tired during the day. Some people can function well with only 5–6 hours of sleep a day; others need up to 10 hours. It is important that you find your own level.

**WHAT CAUSES SLEEP PROBLEMS?** There are several causes of sleep problems.....

**Shift patterns and travelling:** Sleep problems can occur simply because your shift patterns at work have changed or through travelling (jet lag). When travelling, especially across time zones, your body clock goes out of sync and takes a few days to readjust. After a few days, your sleep patterns should return to normal.

**Physical and/or mental health difficulties:** Sleep problems can also occur if you have other problems, for example, physical and/or mental health difficulties.

**Stressful life events:** If you have recently had a stressful life event, for example, losing a loved one, a break-up.

**Bedtime routine and surrounding factors:** Poor bedtime routine can also cause sleep problems. If you nap during the day, it is very likely that you will not sleep well at night. Going to bed too early may result in you lying in bed awake for a long time before falling asleep or waking up early and feeling tired later in the day.

**Environmental factors** can also cause sleep problems, for example, if you live on a noisy street, have an uncomfortable bed, or curtains that let light in.



**Unhealthy Lifestyle:** A poor diet and unhealthy lifestyle can lead to sleep problems. If you eat lots of sugary food or drink caffeinated drinks later in the day, this can stop you from falling asleep. Eating a large meal late at night can also have this effect.

You should also **avoid drinking alcohol** as a way to help you sleep. While alcohol may help you fall asleep more quickly, the quality of sleep you get is poor and you will most likely wake up early in the morning still feeling tired. Also, while it has been shown that regular exercise will help you sleep better, exercising late at night will prevent you from falling asleep as you will still have an adrenaline rush.



## Top Tips for Better Sleep

### RELAX YOUR BODY

There are many forms of relaxation you can try. One form of relaxation is to relax your body (sometimes known as 'Progressive Muscular Relaxation') this involves tensing and relaxing all the major muscle groups in the body. If you are interested in learning about this technique, and other relaxation techniques check out this resource on Wellbeing Services Website.

### RELAX YOUR MIND

Another technique is to relax your mind by imagining a pleasant scene. This can be any image you find relaxing – you can create your own through your memories, something new, or something you've seen in a film, book or photograph you have. Think about this image in a lot of detail, what's going on around you and more importantly how do you feel (what do you see, hear, smell, feel or taste). Remember to keep breathing slowly and evenly.

### CHANGING UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

Another technique which may help is to work on any unhelpful thoughts you may be having when trying to sleep. Within this section we will look at these thoughts and then try and challenge them so that they stop affecting your sleep.

**10 Tips for Better Sleep**

- 1. MAINTAIN A CONSISTENT DAILY SCHEDULE** (Icon: Clock)
- 2. REDUCE CAFFEINE INTAKE** (Icon: Coffee bottle)
- 3. TURN OFF THE COMPUTER OR TELEVISION** (Icon: TV screen)
- 4. DON'T GO TO BED ON A FULL STOMACH** (Icon: Stomach)
- 5. DON'T GO TO BED ON AN EMPTY STOMACH** (Icon: Stomach)
- 6. ENGAGE IN REGULAR EXERCISE** (Icon: Dumbbell)
- 7. LIMIT BEVERAGE CONSUMPTION BEFORE BED** (Icon: Toilet)
- 8. KEEP YOUR BEDROOM DARK & QUIET** (Icon: Headphones)
- 9. INVEST IN A COMFORTABLE MATTRESS, PILLOW & BEDDING** (Icon: Mattress)
- 10. GO TO SLEEP AND WAKE UP USING YOUR INTERNAL ALARM CLOCK** (Icon: Head with clock)

## WAYS THAT YOU CAN HELP YOURSELF RELAX

Try **breathing slowly and evenly** – it will take a couple of minutes before you feel relaxed. It may make it easier if you say the word ‘in’ when you breathe in and ‘relax’ when you breathe out, as this can help you get into a rhythm

- Relax your muscles to avoid tension
- Avoid fidgeting
- Keep your concentration on your surroundings – the ‘here and now’
- Stay calm and don’t rush



## The following link guides us on how to do diaphragmatic breathing

- [Reducing Stress Through Deep Breathing \(Video Resource\)](#)

## TIPS FOR FINDING UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

► **Think about** what you would say to a friend or family member who had these thoughts. Also think about what your friends or family members would say to you about these thoughts.

► **Think about** the reasons why this thought is unhelpful and what are some alternative thoughts you could think about in this situation?

► **Keep reminding yourself** of the more helpful thoughts when the original thought pops into your mind.



## TACKLING THOUGHTS

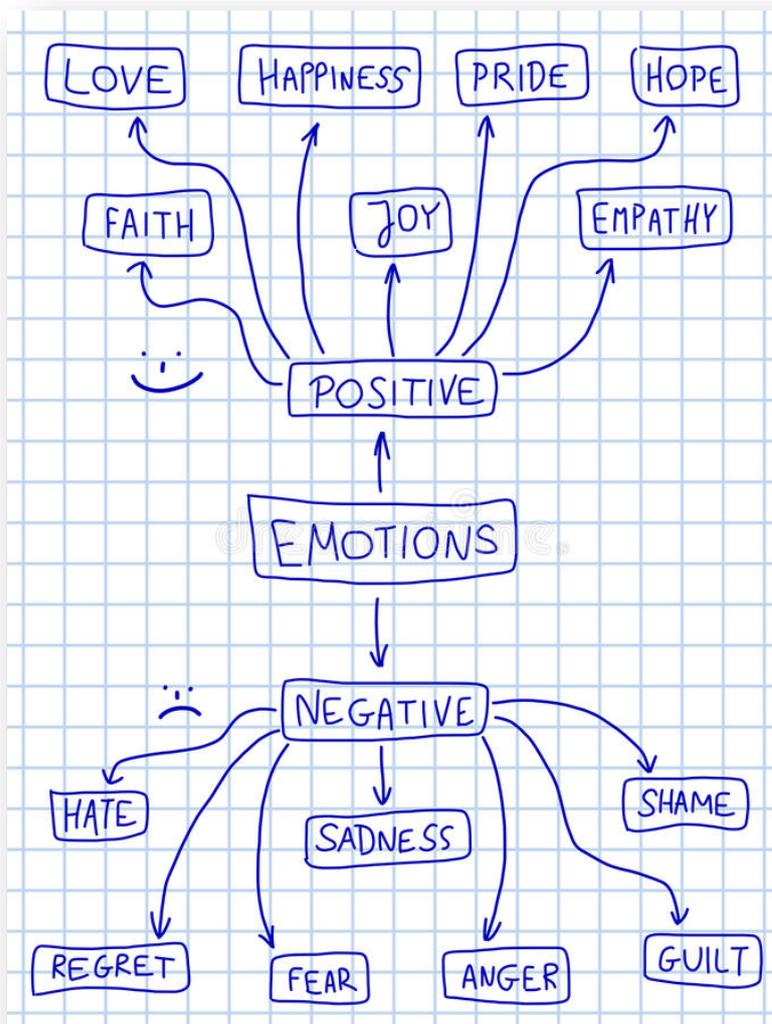
As we have seen, some worrying thoughts can keep us awake at night and disrupt our sleeping pattern. Clearing up your thoughts can help improve sleep, by learning a more helpful and balanced way of viewing your situation. When you have come up with a more balanced view of your situation, this may help to ease your mind, therefore making it easier for you to get to sleep.

Dear Mind, please stop  
thinking so much at night,  
I need to sleep.

## UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS Vs HELPFUL THOUGHTS

“I’m never going to get to sleep tonight.” “I am trying to use techniques to improve my sleep. I always manage to get some sleep which is probably for longer than I think.” “How can I go to work tomorrow – I’ll not be able to concentrate.” “Even when I don’t sleep well I can usually concentrate well and haven’t taken any days off because of my sleep problems. I might feel tired but that doesn’t mean I can’t do my job.”

**STOP & THINK....** Have a go at identifying your own thoughts and answering them in a different way. Now think about tomorrow and what you will be doing. Think about what you are looking forward to and also what you are worried about.



► Write down your plan for the day. If there is anything you are worried about put some time aside in the day to work through some steps to reduce your worry

► Now close the notebook and in doing so close the day. When you go to bed, remind yourself that you have already dealt with everything and planned to tackle some of the problems – this means you don't need to worry at this time

► If new things come into your mind note them down so that you can deal with them the next day.

### Helpful Apps



Calm provides people experiencing stress and anxiety with guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing programs and relaxing music.



CBT-I coach Contains a sleep diary and questionnaire. It has useful tools such as sleep hygiene.

### Wellbeing Services offer a range of services:

**HELP YOURSELF** as we have a large range of useful self-help materials that can help you to overcome common mental health problems including depression, anxiety, and stress. These include tip cards, booklets, video clips and audio tracks. These materials can help you to understand your problems better and provide you with practical strategies to deal with them in a step-by-step way. These resources are available to view or download at our website. Alternatively, just give us a call and we can send out the booklets you require.

**Our recommended resources (click for direct access):**

<b>NHS Inform</b>	Offers the most up-to-date advice on dealing varying mental health difficulties, including the 5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing. <b>Please visit:</b> <a href="#">NHS Inform</a>
<b>Wellbeing</b>	Our website offers a variety of self-help materials, groups, and courses for all sorts of problems that you may be facing. Anyone can download the self- help materials. <b>Please visit:</b> <a href="#">Wellbeing Website Glasgow</a>
<b>Mental Health Foundation</b>	A range of content designed to give you more information about mental health and to help you to look after your mental health. <b>Please visit:</b> <a href="#">Your Mental Health - Mental Health Foundation</a>
<b>NHS Every Mind Matters</b>	Interactive website providing you the opportunity to complete a short quiz which creates a Mind Plan of what you can do to improve your mental health. <b>Please visit:</b> <a href="#">Every Mind Matters</a>
<b>Psych Central</b>	Run by mental health professionals offering reliable, trusted information to individuals struggling with a mental health. There is also an excellent quiz section allowing you to find out more about your symptoms and how to manage these. <b>Please visit:</b> <a href="#">PsychCentral for Mental Health</a>
<b>MIND</b>	Information hub provides advice on how to support your mental wellbeing. <b>Please visit:</b> <a href="#">MIND Information Hub</a>
<b>SAMH</b>	Hub of information and guidance about looking after mental health. <b>Please visit:</b> <a href="#">SAMH Guidance for Mental Health</a>

**Useful Apps:**

	Mind Shift	Rather than trying to avoid anxious feelings, Mind Shift stresses the importance of changing how you think about anxiety. It can encourage you to take charge of your life, ride out intense emotions, and face challenging situations
	SAM	SAM might be perfect for you if you're interested in self-help, but meditation isn't your thing. Users are prompted to build their own 24-hour anxiety toolkit that allows you to track anxious thoughts and behaviour over time and learn 25 different self-help techniques.
	Happify	Need a happy fix? With its psychologist-approved mood-training program, the Happify app is your fast-track to a good mood. Try various engaging games, activity suggestions, gratitude prompts and more to train your brain as if it were a muscle, to overcome negative thoughts
	Headspace	The Headspace app makes meditation simple. Learn the skills of mindfulness and meditation by using this app for just a few minutes per day. You gain access to hundreds of meditations on everything from stress and anxiety to sleep and focus.
	Calm	Calm provides people experiencing stress and anxiety with guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing programs, and relaxing music.
	Smiling Mind	Smiling mind is a way to practice daily meditation and mindfulness exercises from any device. This is helpful during times of stress and is a fun and unique way to help you put a smile on your mind.

Having suicidal thoughts? Discuss with a loved one, call Samaritans on 116 123 or access your G.P. or Crisis Service via NHS on 111.