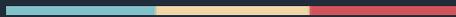


CBT for sleep problems





“Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a talking therapy that can help you manage your problems by changing the way you think and behave”



What is the cause?

- Stress
- Work
- Relationship
- Physical
- Anxiety
- Grief

What are the symptoms?

- Can't fall asleep
- Wake up and can't get back to sleep
- Waking up lots of times throughout night

Mine were: 'Sleep anxiety' and 'can't fall asleep'

Make sure you've got the basics covered



1. Spend time outside every day
2. Don't use your phone / ipad an hour before bed
3. Limited caffeine during the day (2-3 cups) – or change to caffeine free
4. No naps
5. No liquids 1-2 hours before bed (small sips of water fine)
6. Dinner at least 2 hours before bed
7. Healthy eating through the day
8. Wake and sleep at consistent times
9. Limited or preferably no alcohol in the week
10. No TV in the bedroom
11. Dark room
12. Quiet room
13. Room temperature not too hot or too cold
14. No working late
15. Comfortable mattress (when did you last change it?)
16. Correct pillow height
17. Exercise in the day (at least 30 mins)
18. Relaxation / yoga
19. Mindfulness
20. Belly breathing

Phase 1

1. Don't go to bed until you're tired
2. If you don't fall asleep within 15 mins, leave the bedroom



Not allowed in the bedroom

- Reading
- Watching TV
- Listening to music / podcast
- Chatting
- Sex
- Any night-time routine
- Anything that isn't sleep!

Allowed in the bedroom

- Sleeping
- Falling asleep

You are reprogramming your brain to understand that BED = SLEEP

If you're not asleep (or falling asleep in the 15 min zone) get out

Go downstairs and...

- Read a boring book or one you've read before
- Listen to calming music
- Listen to a relaxation app
- Do some colouring-in
- Do a boring job ie take all the cutlery out one by one and put back in one by one
- Do something that takes your mind off sleep but doesn't use your brain

Do not...

- Watch TV
- Read an exciting book
- Listen to an interesting podcast
- Work
- Do anything that interests you

Don't attempt to go back to bed until you're tired.

I tend to wait until my eyes are starting to close.



If you don't fall asleep within 15 mins
leave the bedroom
and do it all again

Other things to incorporate

- Keep a sleep diary
- Get up at the same time every day (yes even at the weekend!)
- Absolutely no naps
- Stop watching TV / gaming / working / screens 1 hour before bed
- Establish a 1-hour bedtime routine (bath, read, calm app, relaxation, candles, music)
- No caffeine
- Don't look at the clock (can create anxiety)
- Wear a sleep tracker (for sleep diary)
- Dim screens after 7pm (inc Kindle)
- CBD oil (for anxiety)
- Prepare lounge for the night ahead (cushions, blanket, water, book, leave small lamp on etc)

Facts to remind yourself of when you're awake

- Millions of people suffer with sleep problems – you're never the only one awake
- Sleep problems normally pass – only 10% are long term
- Average sleep is 7/8 hours - some people only need 4/5, others 10
- We need less sleep as we get older
- You usually get more sleep than you estimate
- The first sleep in the night is the best which is why you can still feel refreshed the next day (body is clever)
- 70% of people overcome insomnia with CBT

Positive self-talk

“I’m absolutely fine with being awake at the moment”

“I will get through tomorrow fine – I’ll do my job, attend meetings, nothing bad ever happens the next day just because I don’t sleep well”

“If I don’t sleep tonight, I’ll be extra tired so will probably sleep fine tomorrow”

“Every time I have to get up isn’t a failure - it is one more signal to the brain that bed means sleep, and one more step towards forming a new habit”



Doesn't work overnight

Takes time to reprogramme your brain after months/years of sleep problems.

Remember you're trying to create a new habit.

Took me 3-4 months

Phase 2



Sleep deprivation

I never got to this stage as I was getting really positive signals after a month in phase 1 and didn't feel the need to move to phase 2

Reduce your sleep window

1. Keep a sleep diary for 1 week
2. Track your sleep efficiency e.g. if in bed for 8 hours but only sleep 6 = 75% sleep efficiency
3. Work out your average sleep over the week e.g. 6 hours
4. Choose a bed and wake up time that gives you a 6-hour window e.g. 12pm – 6am
5. Stick to that sleep window until sleep efficiency = 95% or more
6. Then bring bedtime forward ½ hour each week

This video gives more info on this stage <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjJGfDHCaBU>

Excellent resource

<https://www.sleepio.com> - online CBT sleep programme with personalised sleeping plans and reviews.