

Power Over Sleep

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By Ralph and Demelza Baker

Why is sleep such a big deal?

What do you know about what is actually happening while we sleep?

Did you know that all creatures sleep - even killer whales - but they rest one half of their brain at a time so they can keep swimming.



What happens when we sleep:



What you know?

- Can you tell if someone you live with hasn't had enough sleep?
- Take a moment think about what you are like when you've not had enough sleep.
- Can you notice any patterns?



“Without enough sleep, we all become tall two-year-olds.”

— JoJo Jensen,

Dirt Farmer Wisdom

Yep, you're right sleep impacts almost everything!

- **How we treat each other** - angry words, generally pushy, less playful
- **How we feel** - tired often we are quick to be impatient or believe extreme things about ourselves
- **How much we eat** - when tired we're more hungry and less able to realise we're full
- **How resilient we are to germs** - when we're tired we're more likely to get sick
- **How we think** - we can't solve problems so easily, less able to take in new information so struggle with learning

What happens when we don't get enough sleep:



Cats sleep anywhere....
But we can't!



But **how** do you actually get to sleep?

- Going to sleep is not like turning off a light switch.
- Falling asleep that fast is more like crashing a car than bringing it to a controlled safe stop.
- Ideally going to sleep should be like landing a plane, gently coming into land.
- So it's important to plan the steps you will take to land smoothly.



How do you prepare your body to sleep?

Think about all of you and your senses

- Sight
- Sounds
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch/temperature

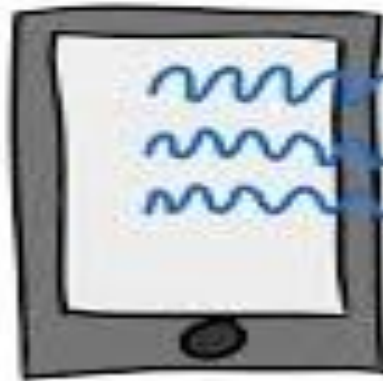
Don't have to do everything just find out what works for you and do the same thing at the same time every night.

How can we improve our sleep?



The impact of screens

Is Blue
Light Bad
For Sleep?



Mindful

Thinks

Alternatives to screens

Often humans find a big change in routine all at once too much, so starting with one change, or a small shift, at a time is likely to last longer.

So maybe move from staring at a screen to using an app, that you listen to but don't look at.

There are loads of good podcasts for kids and the BBC sounds app produces great content and free audio stories for kids.

But, once in bed **how** do you actually get to sleep?

The 4-7-8 breathing technique was created to calm the nervous system and promote relaxation.

1. Close your eyes and place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth, just behind your teeth. Keep your tongue in this position for the whole exercise.
2. Close your mouth and breathe in through your nose as you count to four in your mind.
3. Hold your breath, and count to seven.
4. Open your mouth and exhale as you count to eight. Allow the breath to make a whooshing sound as it leaves your body.
5. Repeat steps two through four three more times, making sure that your breathing pattern follows the 4-7-8 ratio.

Source: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/insomnia/treatment/what-do-when-you-cant-sleep>

Tired Toes, Sleepy Toes

This a technique that involves deliberately tensing and relaxing particular muscle groups, which can help you recognize and release tension in the body.

1. Sit or lie in a comfortable position and become aware of your breath.
2. As you slowly breathe in, clench your toes, noticing sensations that accompany tightening your muscles.
3. Gently exhale, relaxing your hands. Notice tension draining out of your muscles.
4. Repeat this process, tensing as you inhale and releasing as you exhale, for muscle groups throughout your body.
5. For children I also talk them though it - “squeeze your toes, relax your toes, tired toes, time to go to sleep.” moving through the body till it's “Tired eyes sleepy eyes time to close your eyes and sleep”

Play a Word Game

Playing a word game can help you relax by keeping stressful thoughts at bay. Games that engage you in repetitive, monotonous tasks are also likely to make you feel sleepy.

1. Pick a neutral word of five or more letters. Choose a word without repeating letters, such as dream.
2. Think of as many words as you can that begin with the first letter of your chosen word. For the word dream, you might list the words dog, duck, donut, or dimples.
3. Visualize each word you come up with.
4. Repeat this process for each letter in the word.
5. If you feel sleepy before finishing the game, allow yourself to fall asleep.



But what happens when sleep is tricky?

Many people struggle with sleep in different ways, from getting off to sleep to start with or getting back to sleep if they wake in the night.

In fact most people do wake in the night due to temperature changes, the video by “The Sleep Dr” explains it more but if that happens to you don’t worry.

It can be easy to think you’re the only one.

But lots of research has been done into sleep, because it is so important.

So if you are finding something difficult remember it’s worth getting curious, finding out what has helped other people or ask for help from a professional.

Find out more !

FROM NIGHTMARES TO PEACEFUL SLEEP

with The Dream Completion Technique™

A powerful self-help technique that can be learnt in 5 minutes
and can stop nightmares after just one night.

(and can also be used with trauma-focused therapies such as EMDR)



Allan Jones

Founder of All Dreams
Nightmare Therapy, DASH Clinician
and Researcher.

What can you do if you wake in the night?

If you or your child wakes up during the night and needs help getting back to sleep, here are some gentle, calming ideas:

1. **Deep Breathing Exercises** – Try slow, deep breaths to relax the body, like “inhale for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts.”
2. **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** – Gently tense and relax different muscle groups, starting from the toes and working up to the head.
3. **Imaginary Story** – Imagine a peaceful story, like a walk through a quiet forest, focusing on details like sounds, smells, and colors.
4. **Counting Backwards** – Count backward from a high number, or visualize numbers gently floating down, like falling leaves.
5. **Listening to White Noise or Soft Sounds** – Focus on calming sounds (rain, waves, or gentle music) to relax the mind.

What can you do if you wake in the night?

1. **Gentle Stretching** – Stretch the arms, legs, or shoulders to relieve tension, followed by relaxing into the bed.
2. **Reading or Looking at a Calm Book** – Flip through a favorite, soothing book to help settle back down.
3. **Reassuring Self-Talk** – Think of comforting thoughts like “I am safe” or “I can rest and relax.”
4. **Breath Counting** – Count each breath slowly up to 10 and then start over, focusing on breathing rhythm.
5. **Visualization** – Picture a cozy place or a favorite happy memory, imagining all the peaceful details.

These techniques can help calm the mind and body, making it easier to drift back to sleep peacefully.

So let's all get some more sleep!

There are things we can do to get more and better sleep.

- 1) Plan your sleep hygiene routine
- 2) Plan the dream you want to have

Don't Give Up
On Your Dreams
KEEP SLEEPING!



Further Resources:

Books:

Why we sleep - by Matthew Walker

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Why-We-Sleep-Science-Dreams/dp/0141983760>

And his videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-8b99rGpkM>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHgk8Jw_L90

What happens when you gain just a bit more sleep

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9-fJI0iZv>

What happens when we sleep:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpdRKmLePaQ>

Further Resources:

The sleep Dr.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5r2WIJcVH3w>

How to fall back to sleep when you wake in the night:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpdRKmLePaQ>

Further Resources:

Sarah Ockwell-Smith

The Gentle Sleep Book: Gentle, No-Tears, Sleep Solutions for Parents of Newborns to Five-Year-Old

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Gentle-Sleep-Book-toddlers-pre-schoolers-ebook/dp/B00SRXR47Y>

Elizabeth Pantley - No cry nap solution - even if your child is way older than a baby, she shares really good techniques for going to sleep

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/No-Cry-Sleep-Solution-Gentle-Through/dp/0071381392>