

SLEEP TIPS

Sleep is vitally important for overall health and wellbeing with day and nighttime behaviours having a major impact on your sleep. Below is a comprehensive list of good sleep hygiene habits that can help you get a good night's sleep. REMEMBER EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT FIND WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU AND DO MORE OF IT! REMEMBER practice makes permanence, be patient with yourself and your nervous system it takes time to learn new habits.

GENERAL TIPS

- *Be Consistent (don't give up after a week, it takes time for your body to reprogram)*
- *Have a fixed sleep & wake time (Even on weekends and holidays). If you want to shift your sleep time, do it gradually over the course of a few weeks.*
- *Prioritize sleep. Don't let work, study, socialization interrupt it. Especially when setting the habit.*
- *No napping if you are not sleeping at night*
- *Avoid overstimulation (arguments, don't eat heavy or spicy foods before bed)*
- *Avoid mood altering drugs (nicotine, alcohol, caffeine)*
- *Have medical conditions checked out by your doctor such as sleep apnea*
- *Exercise (2-3 hours before bedtime, exercising too late in the evening can ramp your system up)*
- *Eat a healthy diet, stay hydrated*
- *Be aware; overtired brains will crave stimulation to help keep itself awake. Be curious is your brain tired? Is your brain looking for distraction because it thinks you need to stay away?*
- *Talk to your doctor or naturopath about natural remedies*

CUEING YOUR MIND AND BODY FOR SLEEP

- *Powering down electronics 2 hours before sleep (causes mental stimulation)*
- *Dimming your lights down in the evening*
- *Have a hot bath, it will drop your body temperature and help you feel sleepy and relaxed*
- *Test methods of relaxation such as meditation, mindfulness, breathing or other relaxation techniques*
- *Enjoy a cup of a nighttime tea such as chamomile, valerian root, lavender, passionflower (there are many mixed teas out there try a few). OR even warm milk will help.*
- *Use scents in your sleep space that help with calming such as lavender, chamomile, bergamot, clary sage, valerian, sandalwood, ylang ylang, jasmine and frankincense. Some companies sell sleep mixes*

SLEEP SPACE (setting the stage)

- *Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, relaxing and a comfortable temperature (cooler is better)*
- *Stimulus cues - your bed is for sleeping and intimacy only. No active things such as reading or watching TV. Create a space in your room to read and move from it to your bed when sleepy.*

SLEEP TIPS

- *Remove distractions such as electronic devices, noises, lights*
- *Comfortable mattress, pillows, and bedding. Something you want to crawl into and be comforted. This may change with the seasons.*
- *Using background noise. There are sound machines OR there are many apps you can use and play through a blue tooth speaker.*
- *If you often go to bed with a busy mind, try taking all the busy thoughts, putting them in an imaginary bubble and sticking it to the wall outside your bedroom. When in bed if more busy thoughts come, send them out to the bubble. In the morning you are welcome to pick the bubble back up again OR leave it there OR smash it.*

SYSTEMS Stuck in FIGHT FLIGHT

- *Weighted blankets or using heavy bedding.*
- *Tighter clothing like leggings and T-shirt.*
- *Acknowledge you are stuck in the “on” mode. Thank that “on” mode for being so alert. Ask it if it could step back for a few hours to let you sleep. Not to go away, but to quietly be on alert in the background if an emergency happens such as and give it examples of when to alert you.*

FALLING ASLEEP – using distraction method such as;

- *Guided meditation using all your senses. Me, I like to walk through my grandparents’ house. I get out of my car and walk up to the door. I walk up the stairs and open the door. I hear the sound of the door nob turning. (a familiar sound). I enter and see the “mud room” with its familiar smells. (they were farmers and I can imagine the smell the horse barn). I continue the journey through the whole house, smelling the cooking in the kitchen, familiar sights and sounds. Somedays I am asleep before I make it into the house, somedays I go through the house and walk down to the barn and see the animals.*
- *Apps - There are many apps such as CALM that have sleep stories.*
- *Audible books or if you must TV programs playing in the background. Use books or shows you know well so that your brain doesn’t have to pay attention to the story line. Set a timer for it to shut off.*
- *Breathing – Concentrate on your breathing. Try to slow it down. Try counting backwards or forwards. If you lose track of counting, start again, don’t stress. You can also say mentally, breathing in, breathing out Or feel the rise and fall of your chest each time.*
- *Breathing – Taking 20 slow breaths. With each breath think about your body getting heavier and heavier. Take 20 slow breaths with each breath thinking about your body getting lighter and lighter.*