

# SLEEP SMARTER

## WELCOME

Welcome to Sleep Smarter, a 7-day program designed to improve your sleep so you can feel your best each day.

In this program, Dr. Catherine will be your personal Sleep Therapist. She will help you identify your individual sleep style and show you simple, practical and effective techniques to help you overcome the specific challenges you face when it comes to getting nourishing, restorative sleep.

Whether you have trouble falling asleep at night or find yourself consistently experiencing a restless, broken sleep, she will help you to create new healthy sleep patterns that will have you feeling rested and recharged.

Most adults require 7-9 hours sleep per night, yet survey data suggests nearly half of adults get just six hours sleep or less per night, with 80% of us experiencing disturbed or inadequate sleep.

Research suggests that sleep deprivation and sleep disturbance can lead to increased risk of obesity, diabetes, and impact the function of your immune system.

This is why sleep is so important. It really is the key to feeling your best and getting the most out of your day.

Use this guide for the next 7 days to make positive changes to your sleep patterns.



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## DAY 1: WHAT'S YOUR SLEEP STYLE?

There are a number of lifestyle factors and behavior patterns that influence how well we sleep at night. Before you can improve your sleeping habits, it's important to determine clearly what they are. Below is a brief summary of 4 common sleep style issues. Review and consider the sleep style you identify with most.

### STYLE 1: THE IRREGULAR ROUTINE

The characteristic of this style is an inconsistent sleep routine - you go to bed and get up at different times. A regular sleep routine primes our body to go to sleep at the same time each night, making it easier to fall asleep quickly. Going to bed at different times throws off your natural circadian rhythm, so you may find it takes you longer to fall asleep. Insufficient sleep then leads to tiredness the next day. This makes it tempting to sleep in on days where there is opportunity (e.g. weekends) but this again impacts your circadian rhythms.

### STYLE 2: DISTURBED DOZING

The characteristics of this style include waking up in the night due to environmental factors - for example noise or temperature or emotional factors such as stress. Waking up at night is particularly problematic for those who have trouble falling back to sleep easily and can lead to feelings of anxiety and fatigue the following day from a broken sleep.

### STYLE 3: LATE NIGHT INSOMNIA

This style is characterized by difficulty falling asleep at night. There are numerous reasons why it may be difficult to fall asleep at night including stress, the use of digital devices and environmental factors. We will address these factors throughout the program.

### STYLE 4: UNSATISFYING SLEEP

On the surface you might seem to sleep enough hours to feel rested, but you wake up still tired. The challenge of having an unsatisfying sleep is that you don't feel rejuvenated and may be tempted to take naps during the day and often this can lead you to feeling even more tired.

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## DAY 2: HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS

Did you know that preparing for a good night sleep does not start when you begin winding down at night? The foundation for a good night's sleep actually lies in what we do throughout the day. Take this simple 'Healthy Sleep Habits' quiz to identify the lifestyle habits that may be impacting your sleep quality.

**1 = Never, 3 = Occasionally, 5 = Always**

1. I tend to participate in stimulating activity during the evening hours such as working online or high-intensity exercise.

**1 2 3 4 5**

2. I tend to eat a big meal late at night or right before bedtime

**1 2 3 4 5**

3. In the hour before going to bed, I focus on relaxing activities such as taking a bath, reading, or meditating to prepare for sleep.

**1 2 3 4 5**

4. I ensure that my bedroom is set up to be a calm and relaxing space.

**1 2 3 4 5**

5. I sleep with my digital devices - laptop and phone - near me each night.

**1 2 3 4 5**

Have you identified any behaviors you have around sleep that might be preventing you from experiencing a good quality of sleep? List them here:

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## DAY 3: CALM A BUSY MIND

Your state of mind at bedtime has a major influence on you getting to sleep and achieving a good night's rest. When we're feeling relaxed, it's much easier to drift off than when we are feeling stressed or anxious and preoccupied with worries.

One of the common obstacles to falling asleep is lying in bed worrying – this could be about the day ahead, money worries, relationship problems, or just worrying about how tired we're going to be if we don't sleep soon! And the more you try not to think of these things, the more they pop up. An effective way to stop worry in its tracks and help you to fall asleep faster is by changing your focus through using mental imagery. This is where you pick something to imagine that takes a little effort to focus on.

Visualization or guided imagery is an effective way of enabling your mind to let go of worries or thoughts that keep you awake. Using this technique enables you to change your focus of attention away from the worries and stresses of daily life, onto an image or story that can relax you.

### **Exercise: Deep Breathing Visualization**

When using this technique, breathe from your diaphragm so your stomach goes in when you breathe out and goes out when you breathe in. When breathing in, fill your lungs with as much air that feels comfortable.

1. Begin by taking some deep breaths. Push all the way out, and gently breathe in.
2. Once you have finished breathing in, hold it in count to 3 in your mind before breathing out, and do the same when you breathe out before you breathe in again.
3. With each breath imagine a relaxing sensation flowing up your body, like the needle of a thermometer slowly rising.
4. Imagine this sensation flowing up your legs, down your arms to your fingers, and finally up over your head.
5. Intensify this sensation with each breath, noticing how relaxed you feel.

You can keep intensifying the feeling for as long as you wish or stop at the level you feel most comfortable. Try to stay with this feeling until you fall asleep.

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## **DAY 4: RELEASE TENSION IN THE BODY**

Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique that enables you to effectively relax your mind and body through systematically tensing and relaxing muscle groups.

During this exercise I will be asking you to tense each muscle group in turn for about five seconds, before releasing.

As you do this, try to visualize your muscles tensing and then a wave of relaxation flowing over them as you release the tension.

You can do this exercise at any point during the day, but it's a great one to do in bed, especially if you are aware you are feeling a little tense and struggling to relax. After doing this, you may find you feel much more at ease and better able to drift off to sleep.

### **Exercise: Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

1. While inhaling, contract one muscle group (for example your upper thighs) for five to ten seconds, then exhale and suddenly release the tension in that muscle group.
2. Give yourself 10 to 20 seconds to relax, then move on to the next muscle group (for example your calves).
3. While releasing the tension, try to focus on the changes you feel when the muscle group is relaxed. Imagery may be helpful in conjunction with the release of tension, such as imagining that stressful feelings are flowing out of your body as you relax each muscle group.
4. Gradually work your way up the body contracting and relaxing muscle groups.
5. Take a few more minutes to rest. Listen to the sound of your breathing.
6. Enjoy the feelings of heaviness and calm in your relaxed body, and allow yourself to welcome sleep.

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## DAY 5: LET GO OF EVENING ANXIETY

In today's session we will be looking at how it is possible to manage evening anxiety and worry. A letting go mindfulness exercise will help you get some valuable distance from your worries by observing your thoughts rather than reacting to them.

In a "letting go" frame of mind, you relate to your thoughts with an attitude of non-judgmental acceptance. You don't evaluate your thoughts, blame or criticize yourself for having them, or get wrapped up in them and hold onto them. You simply notice what is occurring in your mental flow and allow your thoughts to arise, and to pass.

### Exercise: Letting Go Visualization

1. Start by visualizing a clear blue sky...
2. Now imagine that the sky is your mind, and that thoughts that enter your mind are like puffy white clouds in the sky floating in that sky
3. When a thought arises in your mind, let it just float around in your head like a fluffy white cloud. Just letting it be there, floating in the sky.
4. Now you can decide what to do with that thought. For each thought that arises, you can make the choice: is it something that is important to you, is it something that you can deal with right now...or do you want to let it go...
5. Continue to breathe slowly and deeply, in through your nose and out through your mouth...
6. Imagine that you are standing on the ground, gazing up at that clear blue sky...
7. Now, whenever you notice a thought arise... imagine that you place it on a soft white cloud, send it up into the blue sky, and watch it float away across the blue sky, until it drifts away out of sight...
8. Continue to do this for each thought that enters your mind that you wish to let go of. You don't have to engage with the thought, or get wrapped up in it. Just notice it, put it on a cloud, and send it up into the sky, and watch it float away, until you can no longer see it.

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## DAY 6: DEEP BREATHING TO FALL ASLEEP FASTER

Have you ever laid in bed feeling absolutely exhausted - yet for some reason you just can't drift into sleep, like your mind just won't switch off? Tuning into physical sensations in the body is one of the most effective ways to fall asleep faster.

In this exercise you will focus on the sensation of breathing. The idea is to continue to redirect your attention to your breathing and your body any time you find yourself lost in thought.

### Deep Breathing Exercise

1. Find a comfortable position in bed and allow yourself to relax.
2. Focus your attention on your body, bringing your awareness to any physical sensations you feel, softening your muscles and releasing any tensions you notice.
3. Now bring your attention to your breath, on how you are naturally breathing at the moment.
4. If your mind wanders, just notice that this has happened, and gently redirect your attention back to your breath.
5. Now, we are going to change the pattern of your breathing, by breathing in for a count of 4, hold for a moment, and then breathe out for a count of 4.
6. Breathe in for 1-2-3-4.
7. Hold it, and breathe out for 1-2-3-4
8. Repeat this breathing pattern twice.
9. Now allow yourself to breathe slowly and deeply...however feels natural to you.

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## DAY 7: RECHARGE EFFECTIVELY

If you find it easy to fall asleep at night but you just aren't getting enough hours, or you've had a particularly tiring day, then a nap can be a good supplement to night time sleep and a great way of recharging, helping you to feel more energetic and productive for the rest of the day.

However, if you have difficulty with insomnia, then research suggests that naps are best avoided as it can mean it takes longer for you to fall asleep at night.

If you struggle with going to sleep at night, rather than a nap, a better way of recharging is by having a 5 or 10 minute quality rest.

### Exercise: Power Nap Meditation

1. Start by finding a comfortable place to sit or lie down, and breathe slowly and deeply.
2. Now, gently close your eyes. As you do so, you are pressing pause on your day. For the next few minutes your only job is to listen, breathe and to relax.
3. Take a deep breath in to the count of 4. And out to the count of 6. Then repeat.
4. As you breathe deeply mentally note an affirmation that makes you feel calm and relaxed:

Example affirmations (select 1-3 from list below or create your own)

I am relaxed

My mind is calm

My tensions are melting away

I allow myself to rest

Being calm and relaxed energises me

5. When you are ready, open your eyes and take with you this feeling of calmness and restored energy into the rest of your day.