

Sorting out sleep patterns

Sleep difficulties are a common problem associated with depression. Depression is known to disturb sleep, and disturbed sleep patterns are also a vulnerability factor for depression.

There are some simple strategies that you can use to gradually improve your sleep habits – but the most important thing to do is avoid rigid expectations or getting too stressed about sleep disturbance. This worksheet will help you plan and make small, gradual changes to work towards better sleep hygiene.

1. Keep a sleep diary

The first step is to keep a sleep diary for a week or two, so that you have a realistic snapshot of your current sleep habits. Note down:

- what time you wake up
- how well rested you feel
- how you rate the quality of your sleep last night
- what time you get up
- timing and content of meals and snacks
- any consumption of caffeine, nicotine, alcohol or other drugs
- engagement in physical activity or exercise
- relaxation activities
- what you were doing before going to bed
- conditions in the room when you went to bed (temperature, noise, air quality etc)
- what time you went to bed
- what time you turned out the light (if different)
- how long it took you to fall asleep
- whether/how long you were awake during the night



“Lectures didn’t generally start until late and so I’d be getting 11 or 12 hours sleep or something ridiculous and getting up late and it led to me feeling more lazy; like I wasn’t doing anything with my time; just sleeping or lounging around in bed.” – Daniel

Consider:

What have you learnt from keeping your sleep diary? Roughly how many hours of sleep are you averaging per night? What quality is your sleep/how well rested do you feel? Have you noticed any patterns for when sleep is better or worse?

My sleep summary:



2. My new sleep routine

Read the notes on the 'Sorting out Sleep Patterns' page about better sleep hygiene and look at your sleep diary to see whether there are ways in which you could improve on your own sleep habits.

Write down your intentions for how to improve your sleep habits:

Example:

I will get up by 8am every day, including weekends.

I will aim to go to sleep by 12pm but only if I am sleepy by then.

One hour before bed I will Switch off my laptop, close the curtains/put on my lamp, have a bowl of cereal or a milky drink and have a chat with my housemates, read a novel or listen to my relaxation CD for 20 minutes

I will only go to bed when I am feeling sleepy.

If I am having trouble getting to sleep I will get up and turn on the lamp, write down any thoughts that are bothering me so that I can sort them out in the morning, carry on reading my novel until I am sleepy again.

Things I need to change/do to give me the best of chance of sticking to this plan:

Put my alarm clock on the other side of the room, and ask Josh to bang on my door if I'm not up by 8.15

Get up and get dressed straight away, and plan an activity to get up for every day

Buy some ear plugs so I don't worry about being disturbed if my housemates come in late

My sleep routine intention statement:

I will get up at _____ every day, including weekends.

I will aim to go to sleep by _____ but only if I am sleepy by then.

One hour before bed I will _____



If I am having trouble getting to sleep I will _____

Things I need to change/do to give me the best of chance of sticking to this plan:

3. Evaluation

Don't set yourself overly rigid expectations – the aim is to make sure you generally give yourself the best chance of a decent amount and/or quality of rest. It won't always go to plan, but that is not the end of the world. Work on other aspects of your daily routine, like exercise and relaxation strategies, to support the changes you are trying to make in your sleep habits. Use the diary to check your progress after a while.

