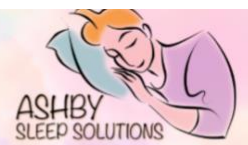


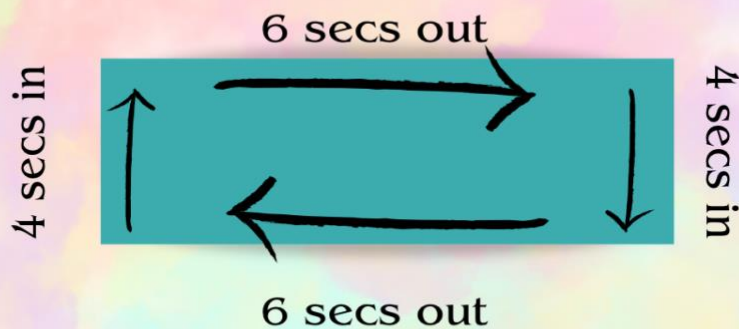
Techniques to help you get back to sleep



It might be frustrating to wake up in the middle of the night when you would prefer to be asleep. The following are a variety of techniques and exercises that have been supported by research to help people relax and release stress and therefore aid sleep.

- Deep Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness meditation
- Non sleep Deep Rest
- Calming Music or Podcasts
- Counting

Deep breathing



The parasympathetic nervous system, which is involved in sleep and relaxation, may be activated by this breathing technique. The rectangle method is one such breathing technique that entails inhaling through the nose for four seconds, exhaling for six seconds, and then inhaling through the mouth for four seconds, exhaling for six seconds.

Counting

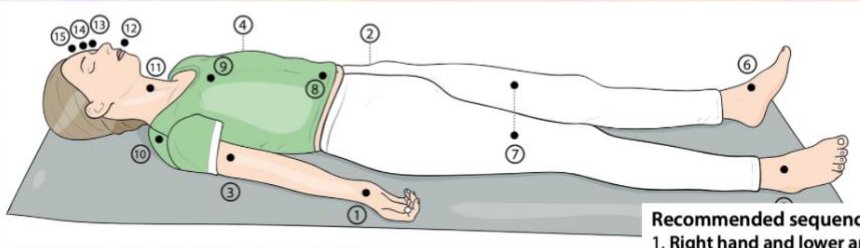


Choosing a high 3 digit number and then counting back in 7's. This can be a difficult task and helps the part of you brain that is busy keeping you awake distracted and therefore enabling sleep.



Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This method entails gradually tensing and relaxing every muscle in the body. One muscle group at a time, you can work your way up from your feet to your head, or the other way around. Try to hold a strained muscle for at least five seconds before releasing it gradually. You may easily find guided recordings that walk you through the process of gradual muscle relaxation.



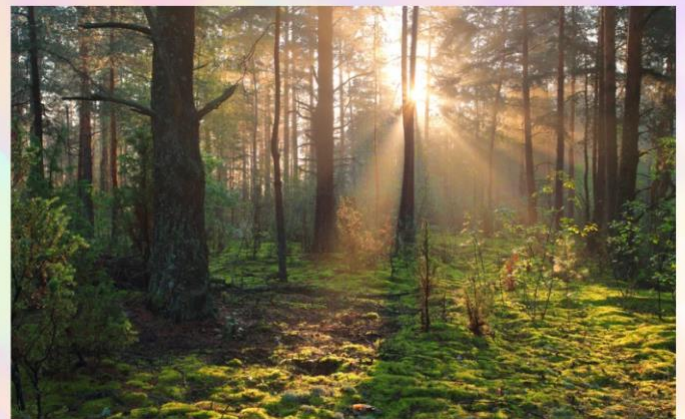
Recommended sequence

1. **Right hand and lower arm** (clench your fist and tense the lower arm)
2. **Left hand and lower arm**
3. **Right upper arm** (bring your hand to your shoulder and tense your biceps)
4. **Left upper arm**
5. **Right lower leg and foot** (point your toe and gently tense the calf muscle)
6. **Left lower leg and foot**
7. **Both thighs** (press your knees and thighs tightly together)
8. **Abdomen** (pull your abdominal muscles in tightly)
9. **Chest** (take a deep breath and hold it in)
10. **Shoulders and back** (hunch your shoulders or pull them towards your ears)
11. **Neck and throat** (push your head backwards against the surface on which you are resting)
12. **Lips** (press them tightly together without clenching your teeth)
13. **Eyes** (closing them tightly)
14. **Lower forehead** (frown and pull your eyebrows together)
15. **Upper forehead** (wrinkle your forehead)



Guided Imagery

When you visualise a calm place, such as a beach, you can practise visualisation with the guidance of a recording. Try to picture yourself in the scene and imagine the experience you would have with all five senses. Try picturing what it would be like to see, hear, taste, smell, and feel the environment, for instance.



Mindfulness Meditation



The quality of sleep may also be enhanced by mindfulness meditation. In order to do mindfulness meditation, one must consciously focus on the here and now and observe what happens with curiosity rather than judgement. There are many other methods, such as breathing-pattern-based meditation.

www.mindful.org/mindfulness-how-to-do-it/



Calming Music or Podcasts



According to research, white noise or music can help people fall asleep more quickly and wake up less frequently during the night. White noise and music probably help people fall asleep by drowning out background noise or inducing a calming effect.

If using white noise, calming music or podcast always set to auto stop at 15 - 20 minutes. It should be low in volume almost a whisper to engage only a part of your brain and keep it busy.



Non-Sleep Deep Rest



Controlled relaxation without allowing your body to enter the initial stages of sleep is known as non-sleep deep rest, or NSDR. Although NSDR is designed to replace naps during the day, it can also be utilised for sleep.

NSDR facilitates the experience of a peaceful, conscious state, much as yoga nidra. Concentrate on a single idea that promotes physical and mental relaxation. Allow the tension and stress in your body to dissipate while you keep this idea front and centre. Use an audio guide or try NSDR on your own.

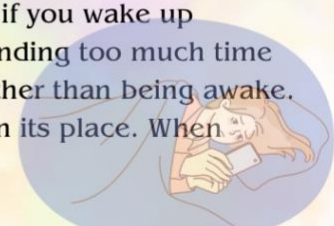


What to avoid if you wake in the night



When you wake up during the night, you should try to avoid the following behaviours since they may make it difficult for you to fall back asleep:

- **Watching the Clock:** Research indicates that individuals with insomnia may find it more difficult to fall asleep if they keep a close eye on the time. A person may grow irritated when watching the clock if they are still awake, which can lead to more stress and a decreased likelihood of falling asleep.
- **Electronic Devices and Lighting:** Try to avoid the urge to grab your e-reader, smartphone, or bedside lamp when you wake up in the middle of the night. The hormone that encourages sleep, melatonin, is produced less when exposed to light.
- **Staying in Bed Too Long:** Experts advise getting out of bed after 15 to 30 minutes if you wake up throughout the night and find it difficult to fall back asleep. You want to avoid spending too much time lying awake in bed in order to help your brain associate your bed with sleeping rather than being awake. Do something calming somewhere, like reading a book or practicing meditation, in its place. When you're feeling fatigued, go back to bed.



Lifestyle Choices



A person's sleep might be disturbed by a variety of lifestyle factors:

Alcohol: Research indicates that drinking alcohol can lower the quality of your sleep, even while it may help you relax and even fall asleep.

Stimulants: Nicotine and caffeine are two stimulants linked to nighttime awakenings.

Certain Prescription Drugs: A number of prescription drugs, such as beta blockers, opioids, stimulants, and psychotherapy medications, may make it difficult to fall asleep.

Use of Digital Devices in the Evening: Research indicates that using blue-light-emitting gadgets close to bedtime, such as cellphones and e-readers, can interfere with sleep.

Absence of Physical Activity: Frequent exercise can improve the quality of your sleep, while sedentary time might worsen sleep disturbance.

