

Sleep Hygiene Tips

Behaviours

Complete a **brain dump** prior to bed time. This can assist with those waking thoughts that rotate around and around your head when you wake.

After 8.30pm **no small screens** at all. No phones, tablets or laptops. You may watch television, ensuring that you are a safe distance from the screen.

If you are the type of person who falls asleep **reading**, no matter how enthralling the book, reading is probably ok. If however, you are the type of person who will stay awake to read, reconsider if this is one of the behaviours that should cease while you are getting your sleep back on track.

A **5 minute relaxing shower** prior to bed may also be helpful; ensure it is not the shower you would normally take to cleanse, but one where you stand and relax your muscles under the warm water.

Slowing your system by engaging in mindful **breathing** can be helpful prior to bed. Ensure your in breath is shorter than your out breath. Smiling Mind have some sleep exercises, however you can breathe without any tools; simply concentrate on counting your in and out breaths.

Products

No caffeine related products after 4pm, 2pm if you can. You can still have your coffee, tea and chocolate (4 products max) just ensure it is prior to this time. Try to also include **sugar limitations** with this, if you can.

Good substitutes are **chamomile tea** or look at your supermarket for products such as “sleepy time teas”.

Swisse Sleep are natural sleeping tablets you could try, but they are quite expensive. I have found them to work well, but there is something important to remember; you need to tie your taking of these with your other sleep readiness actions, within the time frame on the bottle. **Please Note:** If these don't work within 4 days, they are probably not going to.

Lavender is apparently supposed to assist with the sleeping process. You could add some oil under your pillow or put them on your pulse points prior to sleep.

The actual sleep (or non sleeping bit)

So, you wake up and can't get back to sleep. Perhaps your brain starts swirling or you begin to get upset and frustrated at yourself; thinking this is going to last forever. Try to stop this before you get sucked into the panic and employ these strategies:

- Remind yourself you are safe; that this will not last forever and even though you are awake, if you practise the below you are at least providing your body with rest.
- Go back to your breathing; shorter in and longer out. One hand feeling the movement of your tummy and the other your chest.
- Turn your mind to thoughts that are totally boring. Perhaps count elephants or just concentrate on counting your breathes.

