



## It's important to keep active, but it's also important to learn how to relax.

Getting enough sleep can make a real difference to how you feel. It can give you more energy, help you to think more clearly and so feel more able to deal with your worries. Sleep can affect both our mental health and our physical health.

### HOW MUCH SLEEP IS ENOUGH?

Not everyone needs the same amount of sleep. Our need for sleep is usually greater when we're growing and developing, and it gets less as we get older. Teenagers usually need at least 8-9 hours of sleep.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP?

#### Environment (your bedroom)

- ✓ Use your bedroom mostly for sleep
- ✓ Tidy away distractions such as school or college work before you go to bed
- ✓ Cut out light and noise as much as possible
- ✓ Adjust your room temperature, so it is not too cold or too hot

#### Behaviour

- ✓ Try to have a sleep routine, going to bed and getting up at roughly the same time each day
- ✓ Do physical activities during the day (e.g. exercise, sport, walking)
- ✓ Cut down on drinks that contain caffeine (e.g. tea, coffee, coke and energy drinks)
- ✓ Allow your body to naturally adjust to night time by avoiding bright lights, watching tv, using a computer or playing video games before going to bed
- ✓ Set an alarm if you need to get up at a certain time

#### Thinking

- ✓ If you are having problems sleeping, it can be your body's way of telling you that there are other things causing you difficulty; it might be that you're unwell at the moment, or it might be that you have worries that are playing on your mind and making it hard for you to sleep. Sleep is something that you can't force to happen; trying hard to make yourself sleep can cause you to feel tense and anxious, which then makes sleep even harder. If you find that your mind is very active when you go to bed or during the night and this is stopping you from sleeping, you might need help to wind down and switch off.

Try these tips before going to bed:

-  Write down any worries; or make a list of the things you need to remember to do
-  Tidy away things that might trigger worrying thoughts, such as homework
-  Have a warm drink (not tea or coffee)
-  Maybe have a warm bath
-  Have something peaceful to focus on, e.g. calming music or a relaxation exercise

**There are lots of relaxation exercises available in books or online; why not try ours to get you started? It's a short podcast that will guide you through a relaxing breathing exercise. Used regularly at bedtime, it can help quiet a busy mind and reduce stress.**