



WORKBOOK

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Sleep

"Sleep is the golden chain that binds our health and body together" Thomas Dekker



Introduction

This workbook is intended to be a holistic and encouraging workbook designed to empower you on your journey towards achieving restorative and revitalising sleep.

Drawing on the latest research and expert insights, this workbook takes you through the stages of sleep, stress-induced sleep resistance, positive sleep behaviours, overcoming sleep deprivation, and managing sleep disrupters. Through its pages, you'll find hope, practical strategies, and a roadmap to unlock the transformative power of quality sleep.

As you engage with this workbook, our hope is you'll find yourself empowered to take charge of your sleep journey. The challenges you've faced are stepping stones to a better night's rest. Remember, your body's ability to restore itself through sleep is an incredible gift, and this workbook is your guide to unlocking its full potential. Embrace the transformative power of quality sleep and embark on a journey toward a brighter, more energetic, and rejuvenated you.

Getting a good nights sleep

There is no one answer for why our sleep is disrupted. Managing our sleep requires us to continually examine our context to understand what could be impacting it. In this booklet we provide you with some information on the following.





Four stages of sleep

Sleep is understood to take place in four stage cycle:

Light: During this phase the parts of the brain associated with arousal activity and controlling muscle movement slow down. A person can be easily awakened during light sleep.

Deeper: During the deeper sleep body temperature and heart rate drops.

Deepest: This is the sleep where energy restoration occurs. Its harder to be woken up during this phase and the body is less responsive to outside stimuli. This decreases as we get older.

Rapid Eye Movement (REM): During this sleep there is an overall increase in brain activity. Plus, parts of the brain that regulate muscle movement and brain stem regions that control breathing and heart rate all increase their metabolic rate. This is when your eyes dart around, its the stage where dreams occur.

This cycle repeats every 90-120 mins. Most of us need between 7-9 hours of sleep to function optimally. The different phases of sleep enable the brain to recharge and replenish the energy stores it needs to function- and in turn keep the rest of the body functioning during the day



Sleep disruptors

Sleep disruptors are multifactorial- meaning things like lifestyle, socio economic status, genetics, chronic pain and overall health can play a huge role. We have highlighted some of the main lifestyle culprits below:

- Stress
- Caffeine, Alcohol, Sugar Intake
- Menopausal signs (hot flushes, waking early)
- Sharing your space e.g.; blankets/partner who snores/infants
- Hot bedrooms
- Irregular daytime napping
- Bright artificial lights
- Random sleep schedules
- Sleep apnoea
- Being overweight
- Mild depression
- Anxiety
- Work stress
- Shift work /children waking you up
- Thyroid issues
- Uncomfortable bedding
- Chronic Pain/Restless leg syndrome

This list is not conclusive and a consultation with your Doctor is always a good idea if you are already on other medications



Sleep deprivation

Sleep deprivation is more than just feeling exhausted and can lead to other far reaching side effects including:

- **Compromised cognition:** basically we revert to grumpy toddlers! Everything seems harder and complex tasks like making judgements, managing information, considering new ideas, consolidating information and forming new memories are all impacted.
- **Amplified mood swings and mental health struggles:** many state they are more prone to feelings of anger, frustration and irritability. When our tank is low its harder to maintain a steady state mood wise.
- **Increased stress:** the increase in stress hormones triggered by poor sleep leads to increased sympathetic nervous system activity (our flight/fight). Unless we were actually chased by a bear during the day, we need to counterbalance this "flight/fight response" and promote our parasympathetic nervous system as a counterbalance (often called the rest/digest system)
- **Disrupted appetite and weight gain:** we crave energy dense foods, feel hungrier than usual and often can't tell when we are full due to the changing in the hormones that regulate our appetite - our body thinks it needs to prep us to run from that fictional bear.
- **Stalled fitness activity and recovery:** its hard to get into a training session when you haven't slept well, plus your muscles won't recover from one either.
- **Worsened overall health:** our risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart attack and strokes, gastrointestinal disorders and immune function and inflammation levels can all be increased by lack of sleep.



Sleep behaviours

Unfortunately we can never ultimately control how much sleep we can get but that doesn't mean we should give up hope. We can focus on improving our sleep behaviours to increase the likelihood of quality shut eye. Sometimes though we can do all the things and still not have a good nights sleep if this is happening regularly then a conversation with your Doctor might be required.

Here are a few things you can consider to help improve your sleep.

Avoid caffeine and other stimulants after 2pm (earlier depending on how it affects you)

Avoid alcohol 2-4 hours before bedtime. It disrupts our circadian rhythms and sleep cycle, limiting how long we spend in each sleep cycle.

Limit device use-one hour before bedtime, if you like using devices, turn on sunset mode or buy blue light glasses.

Dim the houselights to mimic the sunsetting, light candles, get cosy to let your brain know its night time

Exercise intently in the morning or at least 3-6 hours before bed as this sort of activity amps us up.

Do slow/low exercise like a gentle walk, or yoga in the evening.

Exercise and eat at the same times each day to help set your circadian rhythm

Set a timer to give yourself a reminder to log off social media, turn off phone notifications

Get natural sunlight open up curtains and get outside as early as you can to expose yourself to natural light.



Sleep resistance

Sometimes we are in fact our own worst enemy and we actively resist going to bed earlier. We stay up later than we should neglecting what our bodies need in order to fulfil an emotional need for comfort or escape.

This can show up as:

- Feeling like an indulgent treat after a hard day
- Being delightfully rebellious in an otherwise structured organised routine lifestyle
- Evenings can be an important time for introverts and highly sensitive people to unwind and decompress after socially intense day.
- Provide alone time for those with children or house sharing spaces.
- Be chosen time to escape by watching TV or scrolling social media
- Provide uninterrupted time for snacking on food without having to share (especially when you live with others).

Staying up late can provide us with something we need and cutting this time off does feel like we are being robbed. It can be good to explore how else these needs can be met.

Is it by having time in the morning?

Making time at lunch that is just for you?

Finding faster ways to unwind that mean you can head to bed earlier?

Consider using the early mornings as your alone time instead?



Stress

Stress deserves a booklet of its own, but we are just going to touch on it lightly here. Whilst stressors aren't avoidable, the good news is there are things you can do to equip yourself with the knowledge and tools you need to mount an effective stress response.

Think of us as a bucket under a water tap. As we add more things into our bucket (be they good or bad stress) our bucket slowly starts to fill up. These stressors are our stress load and our ability to cope with the stress depends on a little tap at the bottom that we can turn on to let some of the water out- these releases come via our stress management techniques.

Consider the activities that release stress for you. Some ideas are: meditation, yoga, stretching, massage, playing with pets, time with loved ones, re-centering with breath, mindfulness, jigsaws, colouring- whatever floats your boat...

Also plan for your stress.

Ask yourself, how organised are you for your normal daily routine?

Prep your breakfast, pick out your clothes, plan childcare, schedule exercise and fun activities.

Sit down once a week and look ahead- what's in the diary, what could stress you out and how could the best version of you deal with it?



Supplement support

Supplements can be a helpful tool in getting your sleep back on track and if nothing else they offer a great placebo effect- which is that a placebo can be 50% as effective, so choosing to believe they can help yourself will get you a good way there!

You might want to consider:

- Melatonin (a prescription is required in NZ)
- Magnesium glycinate or magnesium citrate to relax muscles and induce sleep
- Herbal teas like camomile an hour before bed
- Valerian root- to reduce anxiety and assist with relaxation deeper sleep.
- Glycine- helps to lower body temperature at night time
- Ashwagandha - more stress related but reducing stress will help with sleep.
- Lavender/Passionflower- consumed in a tea an hour before bedtime.
- L-theanine- assists with sleep and relaxation- more effective when combined with magnesium.
- Ginko bilboa - reduces stress, enhances relaxation and promotes sleep.

Check with your Doctor or pharmacist before taking new supplements to check for any interactions with existing medication you might be on.



SUMMARY

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As you've journeyed through the workbook's pages, you've gained an understanding of the intricate stages of sleep and the profound impact they have on your physical and mental health.

You've learned how stress-induced sleep resistance can be overcome with intentional pre-sleep routines and a peaceful mental space.

By adopting positive sleep behaviours, you've unlocked the potential for improved sleep quality through simple yet impactful changes in your daily routine.

Through the exploration of strategies to overcome sleep deprivation, you've discovered that it's never too late to reset your sleep patterns and regain lost rest. Armed with knowledge about sleep disruptors and their remedies, you can take proactive steps to create an environment conducive to revitalizing sleep.

The workbook offers a guide through the realm of sleep supplements, woven throughout these insights is a message of hope – a reminder that your pursuit of better sleep is a path to a brighter, more energetic, and rejuvenated version of yourself!

Good luck and don't give up.

Keep chasing that sleep.



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www.thesleepclinic.co.nz

Sleeping and aging - www.startsleeping.org

www.sleepdr.com

Menopause and Sleep- www.mymenopaudetransition.com