



## **NOTES**

# **Good Sleep Habits**

Presented by

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## **Why sleep is important**

We all suffer from occasional sleep problems.

However, we must try and prevent those sleep problems undermining our lives, undermining our health, or putting our and possibly other peoples' health and safety at risk.

Sleep deprivation can occur after just one night's lack of sleep, however most people are able to function at an acceptable level if they are able to 'top up' their sleep by 'cat napping' or 'power napping'.

Famous people who claimed to operate on just 3 or 4 hours sleep are Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher, however both were often caught 'recharging their batteries' by napping for between 2 and 10 minutes. They often claimed that they were just meditating or 'thinking with their eyes closed'.

### **Suffering from sleep deprivation:**

1. Reduces reaction time / mental judgement to someone twice the legal drink drive limit.

### **And in time:**

2. Increases health risk, including; type 2 diabetes, heart disease and infections.
3. Frequently causes; anger, uncontrolled emotion, stress, or substance abuse problems.
4. Often causes weight gain.

## The sleep bandits

- **Anxiety**

The most common cause of sleep problems, which can be based on past experiences, for example; post trauma, or be based on events that have never happened or most likely will never happen. Some anxiety issues may relate to an anxiety about not being able to sleep, thus the anxiety starts before bedtime.

Methods we may use for resolving night-time anxiety include; cognitive behavioural therapy, relaxation techniques, paradoxical intention (used for anxiety about not being able to sleep) or hypnotherapy.

- **Pain**

Either short term, e.g. night cramps, or long term, due to a past injury or a medical condition.

- **Health Problems**

Some health problems can cause poor sleep and insomnia, such as sleep apnoea, some heart conditions, thyroid problems, etc. Often medications can disrupt sleep and cause insomnia.

- **Poor Diet**

Diet can have a significant influence on quality of sleep, from the more obvious need to urinate during the night due to liquid consumption before bed, to consuming stimulants such as caffeine before bedtime, to eating late, to not eating the correct nutrients to help your body and mind rest.

- **Environmental Issues**

Is the bedroom a nice place to sleep? Are there sleep disrupters in the bedroom or near the bedroom? Sleep disruptors can be very personal, for example; some people are sensitive to electromagnetic fields generated by electrical devices in the bedroom, some people need a dark room to sleep.

- **Lifestyle**

We promote a healthy lifestyle but exercising too close to bedtime can disrupt sleep, as can eating and drinking too close to bedtime.

Unhealthy lifestyle issues can become unhealthy habits, such as; getting to bed late so not getting enough sleep, reading or gaming whilst in bed, smoking, etc.

- **Bereavement & Loss**

Not just the loss of a loved one, but will include loss of a job, relationship, pet, or anything else that you value.

## Self-help

If you go and see your doctor, they will more often than not prescribe you with sleeping medication. This can help you get good physical rest but leave you feeling mentally tired. This happens because sleeping medication usually puts you into a deep sleep where no REM (dreaming) sleep occurs. REM sleep is believed to be essential for a healthy mind.

Your sleep therapist will spend time helping you find ways in which you can improve your sleep by making changes to your everyday life.

### ***INSANITY:***

***Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.***

***Albert Einstein***

If you are trying to improve your life, whether it be dealing with stress, getting a new job, stopping smoking, finding a new partner or getting enough sleep, you must be willing to make changes. If you are unwilling to make any changes to your life then expect everything else, including the bad stuff, to remain the same.

## Medical Conditions

- Talk to your doctor to establish if a health issue could be the cause of your sleep problems.

The following health issues are sometimes causes of sleep problems:

- Breathing difficulties e.g. sleep apnoea
  - Overactive thyroid
  - Heart conditions
  - Urinary problems
- If on medication, check if they could be the cause of your sleep problems.
    - heart and blood pressure medications
    - allergy medications
    - Some types of decongestants
    - Some types of antidepressants
    - Some weight-loss products (which contain caffeine)
  - If on medication, ask if you can try a different medication.

## Diet

- Foods and food supplements that keep you awake:
  - Foods that contain caffeine
  - Vitamin B supplements
  - Nicotine
  - Milk Chocolate (dark chocolate helps sleep)
- Foods that can cause you to wake up during the night:
  - Alcohol
  - Spicy foods.
- Foods and food supplements that can help you sleep:
  - Chicken
  - Oatmeal / porridge
  - Milk
  - Almonds
  - Passiflora
  - Cherries
- Don't eat 30 minutes before bedtime, best not for 1 hour
  - If your stomach is awake, then you will be as well
  - May cause heartburn / acid reflux

## Lifestyle

- **Exercise** helps sleep, but not in the hour before bedtime
  - Can help sleep, but not in the hour before bedtime
- **Aromatherapy** - both relaxant and stimulant
  - Just a few drops as too much will stop you sleeping
  - Try Clary Sage, Roman Chamomile, Yang Yang.
- **Social lifestyle** – 'burning candle at both ends!'
- **Bedrooms** – if sleep problems persist, changing the bedroom may help
  - Sleep and sex only, avoid it being your office, games and entertainments room
  - Comfortable bed – not too soft, or too hard, not too hot (memory foam)
  - Blackout curtains
  - Cool temperature
  - Bedroom colours
- **Bad habits** – we get stuck in a habit because it is easy.
  - Falling asleep in front of the TV
  - Habit of going to bed late
  - Reading or gaming late when you should be sleeping

## **Work**

Many people have to work shift patterns that can be very disruptive to sleep. Learning to deal with the problems this can create is essential if you are to cope with the negative issues to mind and body that can be caused.

- **Dealing with shift work**

- Do not neglect your sleep, try and get at least 6 to 7 hours sleep
- Try and make the room you sleep in dark and quiet
- Think about your diet, eat high protein meals to help you stay awake
- Try and keep your workplace brightly lit
- Limit caffeine intake to first half of your shift
- Take a Vitamin B supplement at the start of your shift.

## **Family**

The most common sleep issue that arises from the family environment is the arrival of a new baby. The mother needs to recover from the birth and the father will often need to get enough sleep to cope with work.

- **Working when you have a baby**

- Tell your employer that you have a young child
- Remember that eating breakfast will help you cope with the day ahead
- Eat high protein food up until lunchtime
- Take a Vitamin B supplement at the start of the day (not after lunchtime)
- Remember this is usually just a short term issue
- Remember that most people understand
- Try and take a lunchtime nap
- Remember that if you feel that completing a task will be unsafe due to your tiredness, tell your line manager or HR department.

## Anxiety:

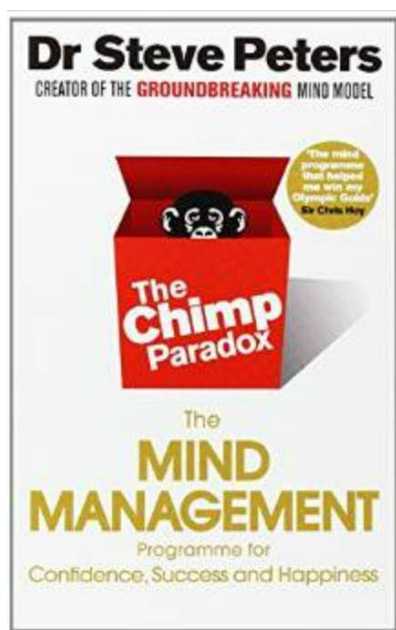
- Is **not** the same as stress
- Is the primary cause of poor sleep
- Is usually worrying about something that –
  - Has not happened
  - Most likely will never happen
- sometimes referred to as ‘awful-izing’
- anxiety is not rational or logical.
- Is often the cause of physical & mental stress

***We can't solve problems by using the same thinking  
we used when creating them.***

***Albert Einstein***

Overcoming anxiety requires that you change the way in which you are thinking about what's causing your anxiety.

The conscious mind may be telling you that your anxiety is stupid, ridiculous or silly, but your subconscious mind has control of your emotions and dreamtime, and does not follow the same rules of logic and common sense that your conscious mind does.



If you want to know more about the differences between how your conscious and sub conscious mind works, we suggest that you read ‘The Chimp Paradox’ by Dr Stephen Peters.

Dr Peters was the resident psychiatrist for the British cycling team and has been credited with helping transform the team and the success enjoyed at the last Olympics.

*“The golden rule is that whenever you have thoughts or behaviours that you do not want or welcome, then you are being hijacked by your Chimp.”*

*Dr Stephen Peters*

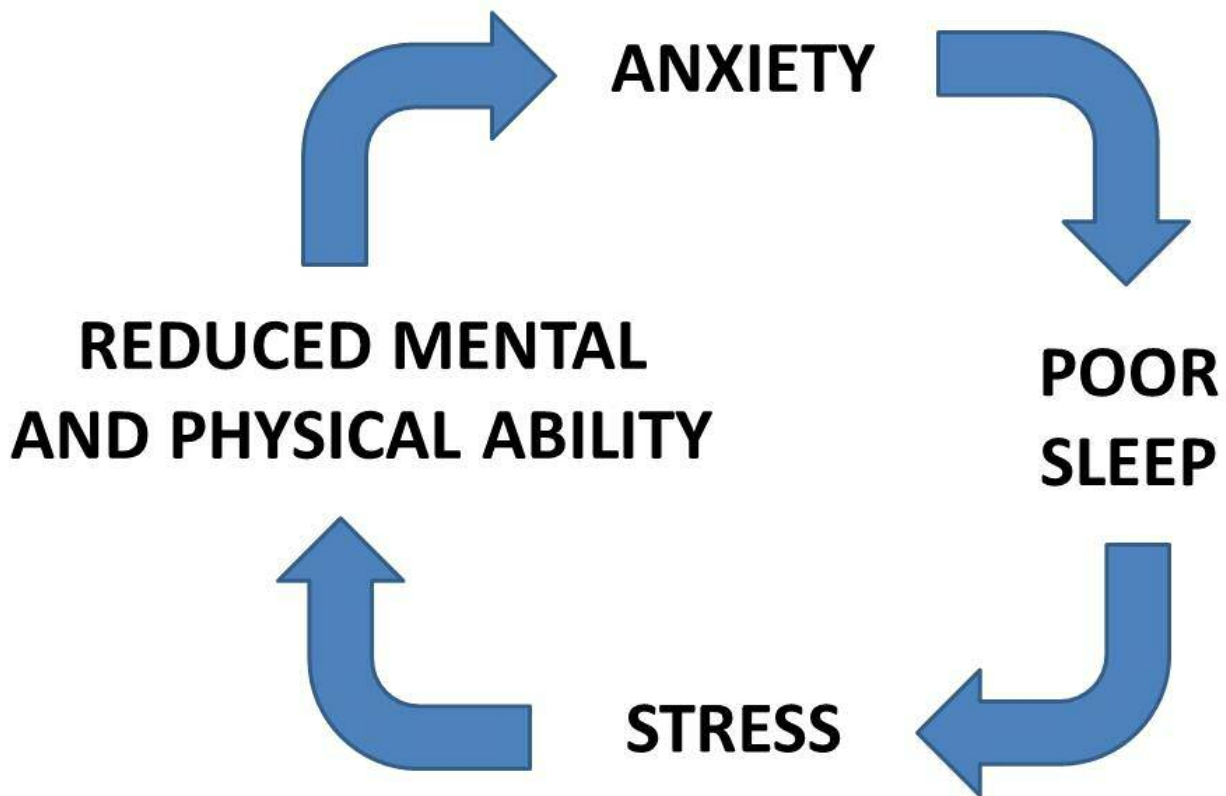
## Dealing with anxiety

Stress is more often the result of poor sleep caused by anxiety.

Stress causes reduced mental and physical ability.

This causes more anxiety.

A thus a downward spiral can start.





# Relaxation

## How to relax

Learning what can influence your relaxation

- Sounds
- Visual
- Touch
- Smells
- Taste

## Exercise

Write down three things that you have done make you happy, smile or feel relaxed.

Think about one of these now (close your eyes if you want to) and try and remember what it felt like at the time.

Try and recall any sounds, touch, smells, taste and what you could see around you.

Now breath slow and deep.

Notice as you breath in that the air is cool, and as you breath out the air is warm.

Keep on thinking about what it feels like in your happy place.

Imagine that all your negative thoughts, stress and worries are leaving your body as you breath out.

And the air that you breath in is full of calm and relaxation.

Keep on thinking about your happy place.

If you wish you can give a colour to the negative air you are breathing out

And a colour to the relaxed calm air you are breathing in.

Keep on thinking about your happy place.

Keep on breathing slow and deep, but stay in your happy place.

## Getting more information

[www.sleepwise.co.uk](http://www.sleepwise.co.uk)

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