



Supercharge Your Sleep  
#4 How to ease the racing mind

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# Welcome back!

How are you doing?

Whether you're **smashing it** with new sleep habits, or still contemplating change, **this** could be the week that changes everything... remember, it's NEVER too late to change your sleep habits. If you start today, you won't regret it.

This week is a sneak preview of a key area we'll cover in our second webinar on **Thursday 3rd June**.

The truth is that even if your sleep habits are top notch, the **racings mind** can still scupper your efforts for a good night's sleep. In fact, sometimes the more rigidly you follow the 'ideal' routine, the more you worry that you won't sleep well.

This week is about recognizing **unhelpful thoughts** about sleep..

Yes, protecting time for sleep is hugely important, but **everyone has the odd poor night's sleep**. Most good sleepers simply forget about it the next day, and move on, knowing that they'll catch up the following night. The more you **focus** on a sleep problem, the more you can **fuel** worry. This anxiety creates physical **hyperarousal** which interferes with sleep.

**Remember: thoughts are just thoughts.** You get to choose how you react to them. You can **accept** them and let them go, **challenge** them, **change** them, or simply **distract** yourself with something else. All of these strategies can help with a more restful night's sleep.

Sleep well,

Sophie

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# Sleep thoughts quiz

What do you think about sleep? For each of the **12 beliefs or attitudes** below, circle the number that corresponds to your own personal belief at the moment.

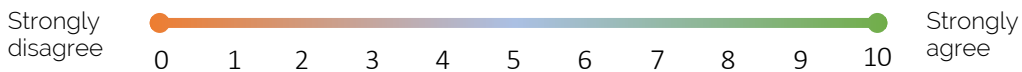
1. I need 8 hours of sleep to feel refreshed and function well during the day.



2. When I don't get the proper amount of sleep on a given night, I need to catch up the next day by napping or the next night by sleeping longer.



3. I am concerned that chronic insomnia may have serious consequences on my physical health.



4. I feel poor sleep is ruining my ability to enjoy life and prevents me from doing what I want.



5. After a poor night's sleep, I know it will interfere with my activities the next day.

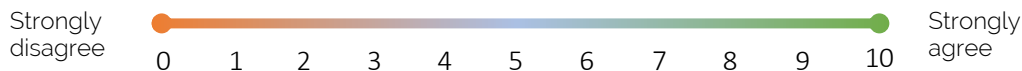


6. To be alert and function well during the day, I believe I would be better off taking a sleeping pill rather than having a poor night's sleep.



# Quiz continued...

7. When I feel irritable, depressed, or anxious during the day, it is mostly because I did not sleep well the night before.



8. When I sleep poorly one night, I know it will disturb my sleep schedule for the whole week.



9. I can't ever predict whether I'll have a good or poor night's sleep.



10. Without a good night's sleep, I can hardly function the next day.



11. When I feel tired, have no energy, or just seem not to function well during the day, it is generally because I did not sleep well the night before.



12. I avoid or cancel obligations (social, family) after a poor night's sleep.



# Your results...

Now add up all of your responses and divide by 12. to get your average score.

Is your score 4 or greater? Those with scores **4 or greater**, or those with high rating on an individual item (i.e., **6 or greater**) may have unrealistic expectations for sleep. High scores suggest that your thoughts about sleep or your ability to cope with sleep loss have become a factor in your sleep problem.

## From unhelpful thoughts to unhelpful responses

Thoughts rarely pop up without an associated feeling, or emotion, and emotions are also often linked to physical sensations in the body.

If you're already sleep deprived, lack of sleep can hijack your thought processes, **exaggerate negative emotions**, and **increase tension** in the body - often leading to **unhelpful coping behaviours** which makes things worse.

### Thoughts

- Here we go again. I'll never get back to sleep.
- I'm so tired. Tomorrow will be a total disaster!
- Why can my partner sleep? It's not fair!

### Emotions

- Miserable, depressed, low mood, helpless
- Anxious, afraid of the future
- Frustrated, angry

### Behaviours

- Stare at the clock in despair
- Roll over, and over, and over
- Try really, really hard to sleep

### Physical sensations

- Tension
- Heart pounding
- Sweating



Unable to fall asleep

The statements in the quiz are taken from the 'Dysfunctional Beliefs and Attitudes Scale' (DBAS-16, Morin et al, 2007)

# Mind games

As soon as you learn to **recognize** unhelpful thoughts, beliefs and emotions, you can learn to respond differently.

## Practicing helpful responses

1. **Acceptance** Sometimes it's helpful to **accept** that you're having a poor night's sleep. Remind yourself that you've coped with worse before – I bet you have! Focus on enjoying the sensation of having nothing to do. Resting rocks. And when you don't look for sleep, it's more likely to show up.
2. **Challenge** Some thoughts are just plain wrong. Waking up during the night does **not** mean you have a sleep problem. This may be a natural break between cycles. Dismiss negative thoughts – this is your overactive amygdala at work. Get comfortable, close your eyes.
3. **Distraction** Thought blocking – saying the word 'The' over and over – can help. Alternatively, count slow breaths in and out, to a count of 10. Repeat.

### Thoughts

- Even if I don't get back to sleep, I've had a few hours already
- I'll use the opportunity to practice relaxation
- Probably just woke between sleep cycles. Am I too hot, thirsty, or need the loo?

### Emotions

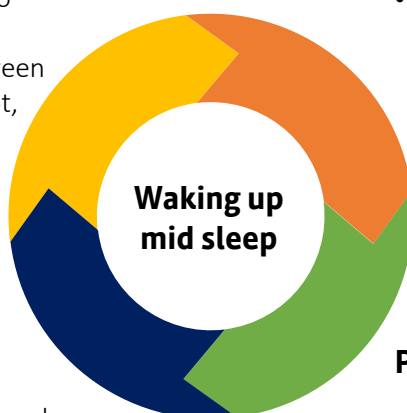
- Reassured and calm
- Confident
- In control

### Behaviours

- Close my eyes. Count slow deep breaths. Enjoy feeling relaxed.
- Progressive muscle relaxation. Gradually tense and relax muscles.
- If I can't sleep for 20 minutes, get out of bed

### Physical sensations

- Tension leaving the body
- Comfortable
- Steady slow breaths



# Mind map exercise

We can all learn to talk ourselves out of worrying about sleep, but it can take a bit of practice. **Writing things** down can be hugely therapeutic – labelling your own thoughts often gives them less potency.

Consider the last time you had a poor night's sleep. What was going through your mind? How were you feeling? Can you put labels any of the thoughts, sensations, emotions or behaviours that made it harder to sleep? Are the thoughts realistic? What could be alternative ways of responding?

Take a moment to **fill in your own mind** map here...

## Thoughts

What did you think last time you had a bad night's sleep? *Are there more helpful ways of thinking next time?*

## Emotions

What feelings accompanied those thoughts? *How could your emotions change with realistic thoughts?*



## Behaviours

How did you react when you had a poor night's sleep? *What alternative ways of responding can you think of?*

## Physical sensations

How did those emotions make your body feel? *How might more positive emotions be different?*

# Sleep diary & habit tracker



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Fill in your planned **wake up** and **ready-for-bed** times at the start of the week. Choose up to 3 pro sleep habits to keep track of. At breakfast each morning, tick successes from the previous day, and feel good about any successes!

Start date: _____	Example	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Target wake up time? (Get out of bed within 10 minutes for a tick)	5:30am ✓							
What's your target bed time? (Only sleep when sleepy)	10:30pm ✓							
How many hours were you in bed for last night?	9 hours							
How many times did you wake up? How long for in total?	2 (1 hr)							
How many hours were you asleep for?	6 hours							
What was your Sleep Efficiency? = hrs sleep/in bed*100	67%							
1. .... e.g. get outside for 20 min	Y							
2. .... e.g. no eating 2hr before bed	Y							
3. .... e.g. phone out of bedroom	Y							
Rate your energy yesterday: 10=best ever, 0 = none	8, good day!							