

## **Establish a regular sleep pattern**

Set the alarm for the same time every morning for seven days a week, at least until your sleep pattern settles down.

Use an alarm clock rather than the alarm on your mobile telephone.

Get up at the same time every day, even if you did not fall asleep until late.

Do not sleep during the day.

## **During the evening:**

Ensure you put the day to rest. Think it through and use a notebook if necessary. Tie up loose ends in your mind and plan ahead.

Try to keep yourself fit by performing light exercise in the late afternoon or early evening - later than this can disturb your sleep.

Have a regular routine before sleep, whereby you wind down during the course of the evening and avoid anything that is mentally demanding within 90 minutes of bedtime.

Avoid screen time, such as TV, mobile devices, laptops, and tablets, within 90 minutes of bedtime to reduce your exposure to blue light.

Keep your sleep for bedtime - i.e. avoid falling asleep or snoozing in the armchair.

Do not drink too many caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea, and certain soft drinks, and only have a light snack for supper. Try decaffeinated milk-based or fruit teas.

Do not drink alcohol to aid your sleep. It may help you to fall asleep, but you will almost certainly wake up during the night.

Make sure that your bed is comfortable and your bedroom is not too cold, but not too warm, and is quiet. Use earplugs if necessary.

## **At bedtime:**

Go to bed when you start to feel sleepy and not before.

Do not read or watch TV in bed.

Turn the lights off when you get into bed.

Relax and tell yourself that "sleep will come when it's ready". Enjoy relaxing even if you don't fall asleep at first.

Do not try to fall asleep - sleep cannot be switched on deliberately but attempting to do so may switch it off!

## **If you have problems getting to sleep**

Try not to get upset or frustrated. Sleep problems are quite common and they are not as damaging as you might think.

If you are awake in bed for more than 20 minutes, get up and go into another room.

Do something relaxing for a while and don't worry about tomorrow. Read or listen to quiet music and after a while you should feel tired enough to go back to bed again.

Remember that people usually cope quite well even after a sleepless night.

Only return to bed when you start to feel sleepy.

Establishing a good sleep pattern may take a number of weeks. However you should remain confident that you will achieve it by working through this guide.

The NHS has published resources on insomnia on the NHS Choices Live Well website. Visit [www.nhs.net](http://www.nhs.net) and search for sleep.