

Try not to worry about not getting enough sleep—it may be that you are getting enough, but it's just less than you expect. Don't take naps during the day to catch up, this will affect your natural rhythm and only add to your problem.

Remember—that your need for sleep is an individual thing and gets less as we get older. You may be trying to get too much. Try going to bed later or getting up earlier.

Tiredness—this may seem obvious but do not go to bed until you feel sleepy

These simple guidelines really can improve your sleep but they take time. Please be patient, your hard work will pay off although it can take many weeks to develop new sleep habits.



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**The Road Centre Ltd**

Counselling Training Wellbeing

# Sleep Problems

This booklet aims to help you understand your sleep problem better and to learn some simple ways to cope

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People can become very distressed when they feel they are not getting a good nights sleep, which can make it harder to get back off to sleep.

There is a popular idea that we all need 7 to 8 hours sleep every night. **This is not true.** Many studies have shown that people range between needing 4 hours a night up to needing 10 hours or more.

### **There are a number of reasons why sleep problems can develop.**

1. Normal effects of aging - when people get older they tend to sleep less deeply and need less sleep.
2. Medical reasons for disturbed sleep - the need to go to the toilet, pain, loss or bereavement and medicines can all interfere with sleep.
3. Stress, anxiety and worry - if you are worrying about something or suffering from stress, you may find it hard to get off to sleep.
4. Depression and low mood -it is quite usual, if you are depressed, to wake up early in the mornings and find it hard to get back to sleep.
5. Surroundings - a bedroom that is too hot or too cold, a bed that is too hard or too soft or a bedroom that is too noisy or too light can all make a difference to how well you sleep.
6. Disturbed sleep routine - if you work shifts which change frequently, you may often have trouble sleeping.

One of the first steps in overcoming sleep difficulties is finding out any possible causes and trying to look for solutions.

#### **Problem**

Worrying about not getting enough sleep

#### **Solution**

Try to remind yourself that loss of sleep will not hurt you, you know you will fall asleep eventually. Lying calm and relaxed in bed can be as refreshing as sleep. **Don't keep looking to see what time it is.**

#### **Problem**

Loss & Bereavement

#### **Solution**

Try not to add to your difficulties by worrying about not sleeping. Talking about your feelings may help.

#### **Problem**

Emotional state

#### **Solution**

Self help booklets are available at your local surgery for stress, depression and anxiety.

#### **Problem**

Medical reasons

#### **Solution**

Check whether you can receive help for that problem. There may be alternative forms of pain relief you can try for example.