



**What to do if you dread your bed**

## What to do if you dread your bed

Falling to sleep can be really hard at times.

Here are a few steps that you can practice at home to help you learn how to get a good night's sleep. These steps really do work if you practice them. By practicing these steps you will learn to fall asleep quickly and wake up feeling great.

After a while:

- You will learn to fall asleep by yourself in your own bed
- Without any fuss or fear
- Without listening out for noises or thinking about worries
- Without the extra hug, drinks or wandering around
- Without feeling too hot/cold/ hungry or twitchy



### Why do we need our sleep?

An interesting fact: many young people who do not get enough sleep say that they do not feel tired. That's because your brain pushes passed being tired and you can become grouchy instead of sleepy.

Even though you might not feel tired, your body and brain do need sleep so that they have time to do the jobs they cannot do when we are awake.

Our bodies need sleep time to heal and fight infections. They use the time take to grow so that our bodies stay strong and healthy.

Our brains are busy too. They sift through all the information we have gathered during the day and figures out where the information needs to go. So if we do not have enough sleep our brains become jumbled making it hard to think clearly and solve problems. Little things then start to bother us and we can become tearful or irritable.

### Step One:

This is the minimum amount of sleep time that you need to give your brain and body time to do their work so that you wake up feeling good.

Minimum Hours of Sleep	
6 to 8 years old	11 hours
9 to 11 years old	10 hours
12 years or more	9 hours



### Working out the number of hours of sleep you need.

7.00	8.00	9.00	10.00	11.00	12.00	01.00	02.00	03.00	04.00	05.00	06.00	07.00	08.00

Write down the number of hours of sleep you need for your age

Circle the time you usually fall asleep on a school night.

Circle the time you need to wake up to get ready for school in the morning.

Count the number of hours sleep you are getting

How do the two numbers compare? Are you getting enough sleep?

### Step Two:

#### Best Sleep time:

So the next step is work out the best time for you to get into bed and the best time for you to fall asleep.

Exercise to do with your parents:

7.00	8.00	9.00	10.00	11.00	12.00	01.00	02.00	03.00	04.00	05.00	06.00	07.00	08.00

Working backwards: circle the time you need to wake up for school in the mornings.

Count then number of hours you need to sleep. Circle this number. This is your best sleep time.



### Step Three:

#### Setting up a night time activity:

This activity begins half an hour before your best bedtime.

Your night time activity signals to your brain that it is time to relax and get ready for bed. When your brain gets this message it sends out a chemical called Melatonin which helps your body get ready for sleep.

Our brain makes melatonin when the lights are low. So to start this process we need to be in rooms which are dimly lit and do things that are peaceful and relaxing.

Electronics such as TV, computers and phones are not peaceful and relaxing. They are full of lights that make our brains think that they need to be ALERT. When your brain is alert, it cannot produce melatonin which stops you from falling asleep.













So, please make sure that all electronics are turned off at least half an hour before your best bedtime.

Think of other things that you can do instead that are peaceful and relaxing; here are a few ideas which you can try before bedtime:

You can:

Play a board game  
Take a bath  
Read a book  
Listen to calming music  
Draw a picture  
Cuddle the pets

**Can you think of any more ideas?**

CALMING Strategies			
	Jumping Jacks		Run On The Spot
	Read A Book		Take A Walk
	Count 1 2 3 4		Listen To A Book
	Push A Wall		Find A Comfy Chair
	Deliver A Message		Yoga Pose
			Squeeze A Ball
			Think Happy Thoughts
			Drink Water
			Build With Blocks
			Yoga: Balance A Book

## Step Four:

### Setting up a bedtime pattern

Each part of the bedtime pattern leads to the next so that you can shift, snuggle and snooze your way towards sleep.

Shift	<p>Start off with a shift activity which tells your brain that it time for bed. A shift activity takes about <b>10 minutes</b> and ends with you getting into bed.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Having a snack</li><li>Brushing your teeth</li><li>Saying goodnight to your pets</li><li>Getting into bed</li></ul>
Snuggle	<p>This is what you do once you are in bed to help you settle to sleep. Snuggle activities help you to feel safe and relaxed. Snuggle time should take <b>15 minutes</b>. It is best to have the same snuggle activity every night to start with so that your brain gets into the pattern of getting ready for sleep.</p> <p>Here are some activities for snuggle time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reading or listening to a story</li><li>Telling your mum or dad about your day</li><li>Writing your thoughts into your journal</li><li>Snuggling your favourite toy</li></ul>
Snooze	<p>Your snooze activity is the thing that happens when you are finding your favourite position to get ready to sleep and close your eyes.</p> <p>It can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A hug or kiss goodnight</li><li>a back rub before your mum leaves the room</li></ul> <p>Now it's time to tell your brain: 'It's OK to fall asleep now'</p>

### What if I am going to bed at 8pm but lying awake until 10pm before I fall asleep?

Some young people find it difficult to get off to sleep.

One solution would be:

Move your bedtime later to 930pm for a week. Your bedtime will be later just until you get used to falling asleep more quickly.

After a few days, your parents will then move your bedtime back half an hour to 9pm and continue doing this until your bedtime matches your Best Sleeping Time.





## Relaxing your body

We need to pay attention to our bodies so that it feels relaxed and ready for sleep.

Have a small, healthy bedtime snack such as yogurt or a small bowl of cereal

Make sure that you have had some form of exercise during the day to get rid of all the twitchy energy from our bodies.

**Make sure your bedroom is cool, dark, and quiet.**  
Ask your parents to help.

**Exercise during the day.**  
Running and playing at least 3 hours before bed help your body get ready for sleep.

**Try to go to bed the same time every night.**  
Your body gets used to a schedule and will be ready to sleep.



**Avoid big meals before bedtime.**  
Drink a warm glass of milk or have a light healthy snack like fruit instead.

**Don't drink sodas with caffeine...**  
especially in the afternoon and at night.

**Have a bedtime routine.**  
Do the same relaxing things before bed each night, like taking a warm shower, reading, or listening to quiet music.  
Your body will know it is time to get ready to sleep.

## Things that you can do if FEAR gets in the way of sleep.

Now you have a pattern in place that tells your body and brain that it is time for sleep.

For some young people, fear gets in the way of getting to sleep.

Some people fear:

- The dark

- Being alone

- Worrying that something bad might happen

Some young people call out to their parents or they get out of bed because they want to see that they are still nearby.





## Save them up call back game

The Basics	<p>To play this game you will need to make three call-back cards. Make three cards with the words CALL BACK on them. Each card allows you to call your parents back one time. If you call out or get out of bed you use a ticket.</p>
The game	<p>Each night you get three cards which you can stick to your bedroom door. When you call out, your parents will come to your door and in a calm voice remind you that you are safe and that it is time for bed They will take one of the cards away. Your parents will not answer any questions. They will not have a conversation They will not tuck you in again and there will not be any extra kisses or hugs. They will just remind you that it is time for bed.</p> <p>If you need to go to the bathroom you can do those things on your own without calling out to your parents. But if your parents see you out of bed- OOPS!! You lose another card.</p> <p>Once all the cards have been used, your parents will tell you that there are NO MORE CALL BACKS. No matter what you say, your parents will repeat the same message.</p> <p>You might get upset, cry or get angry to start with but the answer will always be the same</p>
The rewards	<p>Every morning count how many cards you have left. For every card you have left you get ONE POINT. At the end of the week if you have 10 Points, you get a reward!!</p>

## **Busy Brains**

Maybe you are not scared at night time but your brain is full of thoughts. If bed time is the time that you start to think about all the things that have been worrying you during the day it might be difficult to close your eyes and fall asleep. If this sounds like you it is going to be important to make time earlier in the day to talk about the things that come into your head at night time.

## **Talk Time:**

Work out a time with your mum or dad for Talk Time as part of your night time activity.

Talk time is your time to think about and talk through your worries.

Once talk time is over, if another thought pops into your head, put it to one side and remember that you can talk about it the next day in talk time. This will help you make a new habit of talking about your worries and asking questions in talk time instead of when you should be winding down for bedtime.



## **Extra things to help your brain feel calm and relaxed:**

It is also helpful to have some things that you can do to calm your brain down.

Make a dream box that contains peaceful and relaxing activities you can do to calm your brain down at bedtime.

## Night Time Waking:

Sometimes you might find that you wake up during the night. Some children develop unhelpful habits and walk into their parents bedrooms.

If this happens, your parents will bring you back to your room and remind you that you are safe and that it is time for sleep.

Get back into bed. Roll over. Do a circle breath. Think of a happy place. Let yourself drift back to sleep. Remind yourself that you are safe and secure.

## Bad dreams

Next time you have a bad dream, remind your brain that you are in charge. It is your dream and you can make it be whatever you want it to be.

Think of your dream as if it was a film.

Imagine you are the director of the film and you are in charge of what happens in the dream

Imagine your favourite super hero.

Make something funny happen that makes you laugh

It is your dream and it can be whatever you want it to be.

The more you practice this the easier it will get.



