



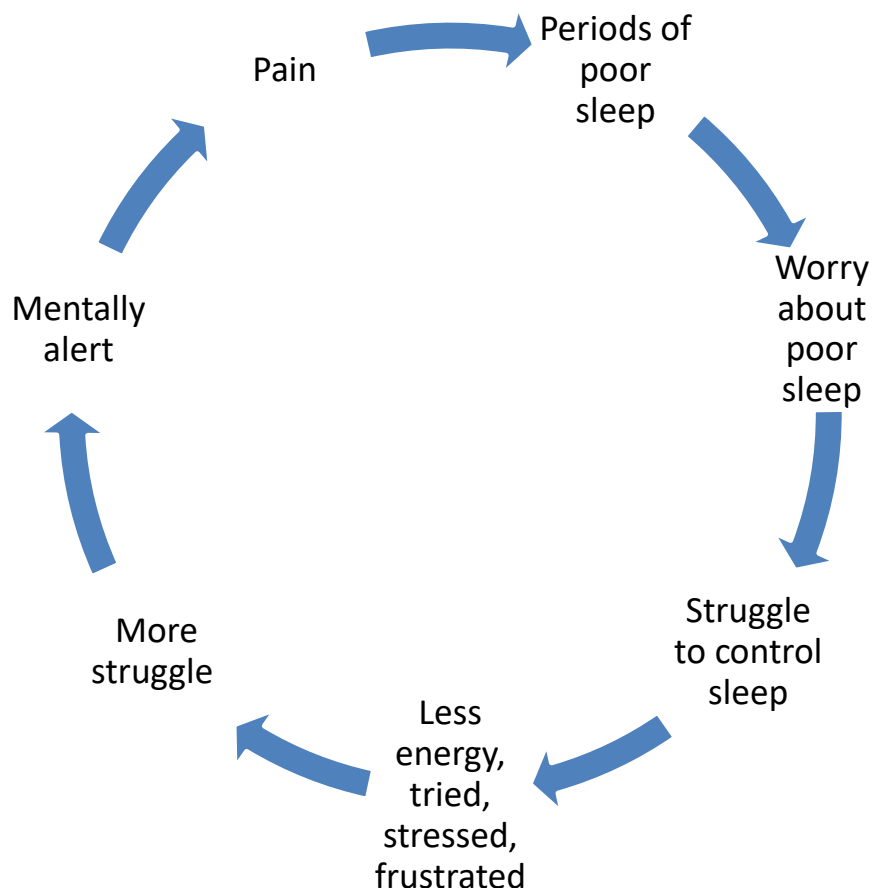
## Sleep

Poor sleep and pain often go hand-in hand, creating a cycle that is hard to break. Many people who are in pain report that they either don't get enough sleep, or that they wake up feeling unrefreshed. A lack of sleep can leave you feeling fatigued, run down and irritable, and your ability to cope with pain reduces.

### **The Way We Think About Sleep**

There are behaviours and attitudes that can be helpful and contribute to better sleep quality. Equally there are habits and beliefs that can interfere with our sleep. This leaflet aims to support you improve the quality of your sleep by looking into those sleep habits.

Sleep is an important part of our health & wellbeing. We do not always have full control over our sleep, and we might experience problems with sleeping. In some cases, it is the struggle to control our sleep that can push sleep further away. We can, however, change our sleep attitudes and create behaviours that facilitate better sleep.





## Benefits of Sleep

It is important to remember that everyone's experience of sleep is different. However, some of the benefits of sleep include:

- Alertness
- Clarity
- Memory consolidation

## Types of Sleep Problems

People can experience difficulties with their sleep in many ways. These include issues around:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Poor sleep duration
- Poor sleep quality
- Not feeling refreshed in the morning

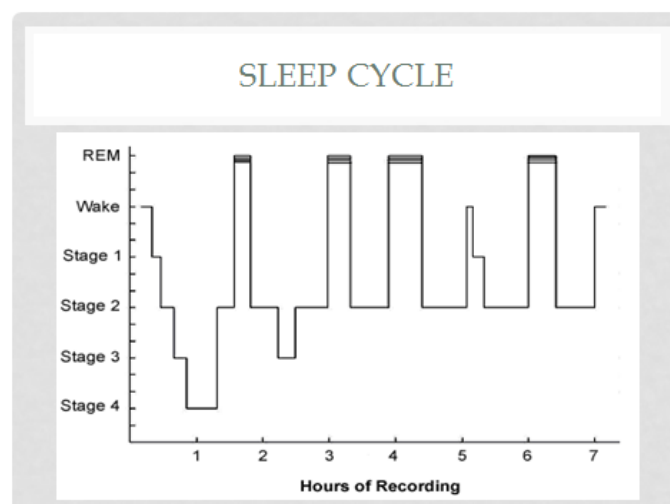
## Adverse effects of disturbed sleep:

- Altered psychological or emotional responses
- Exacerbated stress levels

## What is a “normal” amount of sleep?

There is no 'right' amount of sleep, and everybody is different. Our needs change for several reasons including age, physical and emotional health, lifestyle etc

It is normal to wake several times a night and to go through periods when sleep is disturbed or have nights when sleep does not arrive easily.





## **Sleep Attitudes**

Establishing new sleep attitudes and behaviours can take weeks or even months, so it is important to be patient with yourself. You may find that you have unhelpful thoughts, sensations and urges that create barriers to sleep. By noticing and accepting these, rather than making a judgment of them, you can help to reduce their stimulating effect.

### **Unhelpful sleep attitudes**

- I need to sleep for 8 hours
- I am worried I may lose my ability to control my sleep
- A poor night's sleep will disturb my activities the next day

### **Helpful sleep attitudes:**

- The amount of sleep I get is individual to myself and my current condition
- I cannot control my sleep, only my behaviours around my sleep
- I am in control of my day despite my sleep, and can alter my activities as appropriate



### **Sleep strategies to experiment with:**

#### **During the day:**

- Avoid daytime naps. If you need to nap, keep it to 20 minutes and before 3pm
- Become more physically active
- Become more mentally active
- Spend some time outdoors

#### **During the evening:**

- Avoid alcohol and big meals
- Avoid stimulating drinks such as tea, coffee and energy drinks
- Have a regular bedtime and get up time. Routine prepares your mind and body for sleep
- Relax before going to bed
- Avoid stimulating activities just before bedtime (eg. TV, exercise)

#### **Around bedtime:**

- Make sure your bedroom is comfortable, quiet and dark
- Keep your bedroom slightly cool, but not cold
- Turn the clock face away from you to avoid clock watching
- Don't eat, work, read or watch TV in bed. Help your body learn to associate your bedroom with sleep.
- Use relaxation techniques
- Acknowledge your pain, but don't react to it
- Deal with distressing thought
- Keep a pen and paper by your bed to write down your worries
- After 20 minutes get up and do something relaxing (don't watch TV). When you feel sleepy go back to bed. Repeat until you fall asleep.

#### **Medicines**

- Discuss your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist

#### **Anxiety and/or depression**

- Consider if you need to take steps to address your anxiety and/or depression



### **Take home message**

There is no 'right' amount of sleep, and it is normal to wake a number of times during the night.

It is useful to be aware of unhelpful habits that may interfere with sleep, but too much focus on getting it right is not helpful. It is the struggle with sleeplessness and trying to force sleep that makes it worse and increases stress, anxiety, and poor sleep.

### **Ask yourself....**

What small action can I take this week to reduce the struggle with sleep?

### **Online resources**

#### **Podcasts:**

Good Sleep Habits and Sleep Misconceptions with Dr Guy Meadows | Feel Better Live More Podcast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jox1RhNdxB8>

#### **Websites:**

The Sleep School: <https://sleepschool.org>

Live well with pain: <https://my.livewellwithpain.co.uk/resources/sleeping-better/>

Retrain Pain Foundation: <https://www.retrainpain.org>

#### **Books:**

Overcoming Insomnia and Sleep Problems  
*by Colin Espie*

Sleeping with Pain  
*by Dr Sue Peacock*

The Sleep Book  
*by Dr Guy Meadows*