

Talkspace Sleep Therapy

WORKSHEET

FAQ | Maintaining your gains

Do I have to stick to my sleep program forever?

Yes – if by “sleep program” you mean the new perspective you’ve gained on sleep and your changed relationship to sleeping. We hope these changes will last forever. Your ability to experience and recognize healthy sleep will also arm you to notice when you’re starting to get back into the sleep struggle if something throws you off.

No – if by “sleep program” you mean the careful attention to the daily choices surrounding sleep that you’ve been making. Once you are re-experiencing reliable, healthy sleep, you may consider returning to some of your previous patterns and preferred lifestyle choices. Many folks however do not miss any of the things they were doing before and decide to continue on with their new daily and sleep routines.

There are some things I’d like to change back. What’s the best way to proceed without destroying all of my progress?

If you had to stick to just 3 changes, these would be our top picks, but be sure to check your choices against your Sleep Log, inform your new choices with data from your actual sleep, you’re not everyone, you’re you:

1. Continue to get up within 15 to 30 minutes of your set wake time, no matter when you get to sleep.
2. Try to keep a consistent bedtime too, but only go to bed when you are feeling sleepy.

WORKSHEET

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3. If you find yourself getting frustrated or anxious once you're in bed, get back out of bed until you're ready for sleep.

I'm considering napping again, sleeping in on weekends, and drinking more caffeine. Will this derail my progress?

We recommend you only make one change at a time and then track it for a couple weeks to see its impact. Start with the change you most want to make and see what happens. If it negatively impacts your sleep, ask yourself if what you've returned to is worth what you're losing in sleep. If on the other hand your sleep remains stable, then try adding another change and repeat the data gathering process so you continue to make informed decisions about your sleep.

How do I prepare for unforeseen setbacks?

Reflect on all you have learned about your sleep. What are the most disruptive triggers for you? Long weekends? Work stress? Holidays? Changes to your schedule or daylight savings? Remain watchful and anticipate challenges, but don't become too hypervigilant. You've learned by now that your brain knows how to sleep, you just need to get out of its way. Prepare ahead, but trust it to return to a reliable schedule even when faced with changes.

Just days after completing my program I had one of the worst night's sleep I've had in awhile.

It is important to make a distinction between a lapse and a relapse. Everyone has a poor night's sleep every now and then. A poor night's sleep is a lapse. If you allow a lapse or some imperfection in your sleeping to trigger a return to anxiety, frustration and fear, then you may experience a relapse back into insomnia. Remember your skills. Cognitive restructuring, willingness and acceptance, sleep hygiene are there to help you manage the occasional but inevitable lapse in sleep. In fact, if you don't have a lapse from time to time you may ask yourself whether you're allowing yourself some flexibility to live your life and enjoy spontaneity.

WORKSHEET

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If you find yourself falling back into a persistent pattern of poor sleep, return to your program as soon as you can. It's easier to rein in early changes than to let it go for a while. Revisit your exercises, your Sleep Log, and your behavioral strategies. Track your progress, notice what is working, adjust to what is not working.