



SLEEP WORKBOOK 02

Quieting a Busy Mind Before Sleep

A gentle workbook for racing thoughts, mental lists, replaying conversations, worry and the feeling that your brain becomes busiest just when you want to rest.

NOTICE • TRY • REFLECT

You do not need to empty your mind to sleep. These pages help you notice what your brain is doing, give thoughts somewhere to go and find settling strategies that feel manageable.

This workbook belongs to:

What Happens When My Head Hits the Pillow?

A busy mind at bedtime can take many forms. Start by recognising your own pattern without judging it.

Trying to force thoughts away can sometimes make them feel louder. The first step is not to 'switch off' perfectly - it is to notice what keeps asking for your attention.

Which sound familiar?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ I replay conversations | ☐ I plan tomorrow in my head |
| ☐ I remember things I forgot to do | ☐ I worry about things that might happen |
| ☐ I mentally rehearse what I need to say | ☐ I jump rapidly between unrelated thoughts |
| ☐ I get new ideas when I should be sleeping | ☐ I think about mistakes or embarrassing moments |
| ☐ I become more aware of worries in the quiet | ☐ I feel tired physically but mentally alert |

REFLECT

When does my mind feel busiest?

What tends to be happening, or what kinds of thoughts show up?

How hard is it to mentally settle at bedtime?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Easy				Very hard

A brain dump is not about solving everything tonight. It simply gives unfinished thoughts a place outside your head.

My bedtime brain dump

Lighter



Still full



Does This Need My Attention Tonight?

Not every thought needs an answer at bedtime. Sorting thoughts can help separate what needs action from what can safely wait.

The aim is not to dismiss important worries. It is to decide whether there is anything useful you can do right now - and, if not, give yourself permission to return to it later.

NOW

Something small I genuinely need to do before bed.

TOMORROW

Important, but it can wait until I am rested.

LET IT BE

A thought I do not need to solve or act on right now.

TRY

One thing I want to remember tomorrow

Write it here so your brain does not have to keep holding onto it.

TRY

When My Mind Gets Stuck in a Loop



Sometimes the same thought returns again and again. Rather than arguing with it, try naming what is happening and choosing your next response.

A thought can feel urgent without requiring an immediate solution. Naming the pattern can create a little distance between having a thought and needing to follow it.

THE THOUGHT THAT KEEPS RETURNING

What is your mind repeatedly bringing back?

WHAT IS IT ASKING ME FOR?

An answer? certainty? reassurance? action?

CAN I USEFULLY ACT ON IT TONIGHT?

Circle: YES / NO / NOT SURE

IF NOT, WHAT CAN I SAY TO MYSELF?

For example: 'I have written this down. I can return to it tomorrow.'



Create My Mental Wind-Down Plan

Choose a few strategies that help your mind transition out of problem-solving mode. You do not need to use every option every night.

What might help me?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Brain dump | ☐ Write tomorrow's top priorities |
| ☐ Read something familiar | ☐ Listen to calm audio |
| ☐ Breathing or grounding | ☐ Gentle stretching |
| ☐ Low-stimulation activity | ☐ Dim lights / reduce stimulation |
| ☐ Put my phone out of reach | ☐ Use a reassuring phrase |
| ☐ Set a 'thinking time' earlier | ☐ Something else: _____ |

BUILD

My mental wind-down

Earlier in the evening, I will...

Before getting into bed, I will...

If my thoughts become busy in bed, I will...

KEEP IT SIMPLE

My minimum version on a difficult night

Choose just ONE thing you can do when you have very little energy.



My 7-Night Busy Mind Experiment

Use this page to notice patterns rather than judge your sleep. You are looking for what helps your mind feel less 'on duty' at bedtime.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Used a mental wind-down	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mind felt quieter	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5
Settling felt easier	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5

For the last two rows, write a number from 1-5 inside each circle (1 = not at all, 5 = very).

What did I discover?

MY MOST HELPFUL STRATEGY

MY BIGGEST MENTAL TRIGGER

SOMETHING I WANT TO CHANGE

SOMETHING I WANT TO KEEP

You do not have to make your mind completely blank. The aim is to help it feel safe enough to stop solving, planning and remembering everything for tonight.