



SLEEP WORKBOOK 03

When You Can't Fall Asleep

A practical workbook for the nights when you are in bed, you want to sleep, but sleep simply is not happening.

NOTICE • TRY • REFLECT

Explore what happens when you are awake, what keeps the cycle going and how to create a gentle plan for responding without turning sleep into a battle.

This workbook belongs to:

NOTICE

What Happens When I Can't Sleep?

Being awake in bed can quickly become frustrating. Notice what you tend to do, think and feel when sleep is not arriving.



The more pressure we put on ourselves to sleep, the more alert and frustrated we can become. Understanding your usual response gives you somewhere practical to begin.

Which sound familiar?

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ I check the time repeatedly | ☐ I calculate how many hours of sleep are left |
| ☐ I check my phone | ☐ I keep changing position |
| ☐ I tell myself I HAVE to sleep | ☐ I worry about how I will cope tomorrow |
| ☐ I feel physically restless | ☐ I become irritated or upset |
| ☐ I notice every little sound or sensation | ☐ I stay in bed trying harder and harder |

REFLECT

What usually happens for me?

Think about what you do first, what happens next and how you feel as time passes.

How stressful does being awake in bed feel?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not very				Very stressful

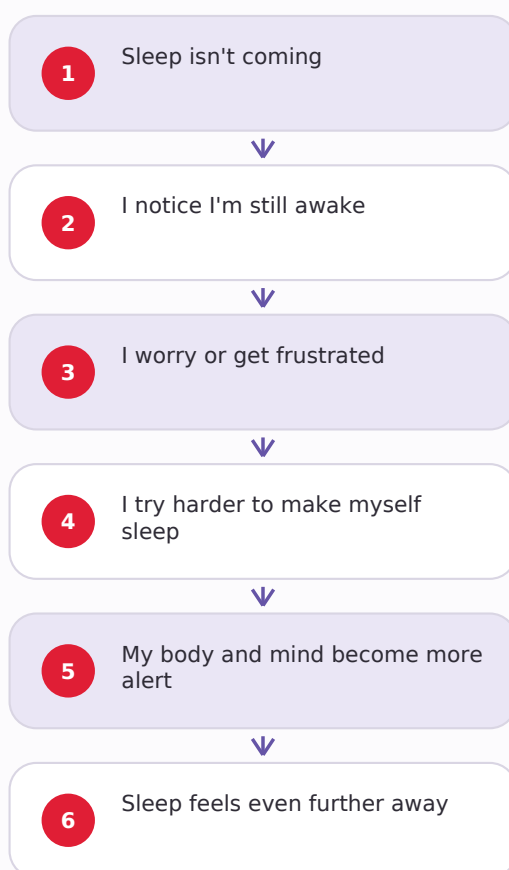
NOTICE

The Trying-to-Sleep Cycle

Sometimes the effort to make sleep happen can accidentally make us more alert. See which parts of this cycle you recognise.



Sleep is not something we can force on command. Clock-watching, worrying and repeatedly checking whether we are asleep yet can increase pressure and wakefulness.



REFLECT

Where could I interrupt my cycle?

Circle a stage above, then write one gentler response you could try instead.



What Is Keeping Me Awake Tonight?

Before deciding what to do next, check whether your mind, body, environment or practical needs are asking for attention.

MIND

- ☐ Racing thoughts
- ☐ Worry
- ☐ Planning / remembering
- ☐ Frustration about sleep

BODY

- ☐ Tension or restlessness
- ☐ Pain / discomfort
- ☐ Hunger or thirst
- ☐ Too alert to settle

ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ Noise
- ☐ Light
- ☐ Temperature
- ☐ Bedding / clothing

PRACTICAL

- ☐ Caffeine or late stimulation
- ☐ Late nap
- ☐ Work / caring demands
- ☐ Something unfinished

REFLECT

What do I need right now?

Not 'what will make me sleep immediately?' - what would help me feel a little more comfortable, settled or less pressured?

If Sleep Isn't Coming

When you have been lying awake and becoming more alert or frustrated, changing what you are doing can help break the struggle-with-sleep cycle.

Avoid repeatedly checking the clock. If you are lying awake for a while and becoming frustrated, consider getting out of bed and doing something quiet and low-stimulation. Return to bed when you feel sleepy again.

Low-stimulation things I could try

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Read something calm | ☐ Listen to quiet audio |
| ☐ Sit somewhere comfortable | ☐ Gentle breathing |
| ☐ A simple puzzle or colouring | ☐ Write down a thought / reminder |
| ☐ Very gentle stretching | ☐ Dim the lights |
| ☐ Have a small drink if needed | ☐ Something else: _____ |

TRY

Instead of battling with sleep, I can...

Choose a response that feels quiet, safe and realistic for you.

Keep lighting low and avoid turning this into a productive middle-of-the-night project. The aim is to reduce alertness and pressure, not start a second day.



My Awake-at-Night Plan

Make the decision now, while you are rested, so you do not have to work it all out at 2 a.m.

1. I NOTICE I'M STILL AWAKE

My signs of frustration or alertness are...

2. I CHECK WHAT I NEED

Mind, body, environment or something practical?

3. I CHOOSE A QUIET RESPONSE

What low-stimulation activity could I use?

4. I NOTICE SLEEPINESS RETURNING

What does sleepy feel like in my body?

5. I RETURN TO BED

One reassuring thought I can take back with me...

MY BOUNDARIES

Things I DON'T want to do when I can't sleep

For example: repeatedly check the time, start work, scroll upsetting content or keep calculating how much sleep is left.



My 7-Night Experiment

Notice whether changing your response to wakefulness reduces pressure, even if sleep does not improve immediately.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Noticed clock-watching or sleep pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Used my awake-at-night plan	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Settling felt easier	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5

Tick the first two rows. For 'settling felt easier', write 1-5 inside the circle (1 = not at all, 5 = very).

What did I discover?

WHAT REDUCED THE PRESSURE?

WHAT KEPT ME MORE ALERT?

ONE THING I WILL CHANGE

ONE THING I WILL KEEP

A difficult night does not mean you have failed. The aim is to make wakefulness less of a battle and help your bed remain associated with rest rather than frustration.