



SLEEP WORKBOOK 05

Sleep & Neurodivergence

A flexible workbook for exploring how attention, sensory needs, transitions, stimulation, routines and individual sleep patterns can affect rest.

NOTICE • TRY • REFLECT

There is no single 'neurodivergent sleep routine'. Use these pages to notice what your own brain and body need, then build supports around those patterns rather than forcing yourself into a routine that does not fit.

This workbook belongs to:



How Does My Brain Affect Sleep?

Neurodivergent people can experience sleep in very different ways. Tick what feels familiar to you - there is no expectation that every item will apply.

ADHD, autism and other neurodevelopmental differences can affect sleep through attention, arousal, sensory processing, routines and transitions. Your individual pattern matters more than fitting a stereotype.

What do I recognise?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I lose track of time at night | ☐ I hyperfocus and delay bedtime |
| ☐ Stopping an activity feels difficult | ☐ I need stimulation to settle |
| ☐ My thoughts become very active | ☐ I feel tired but suddenly get a 'second wind' |
| ☐ Small sounds keep me alert | ☐ Light bothers me when I am trying to sleep |
| ☐ Bedding or clothing sensations distract me | ☐ I need things to feel 'just right' |
| ☐ Rigid routines feel stressful | ☐ Changes to routine disrupt my sleep |

REFLECT

The biggest challenge for me is...

Think about what most often gets between feeling tired and actually settling to sleep.

NOTICE

My Sleep Sensory Profile

A bedroom that looks relaxing to someone else may not feel comfortable to your nervous system. Explore what helps your senses settle.



SOUND

- ☐ Silence
- ☐ Steady background sound
- ☐ Fan / white noise
- ☐ Earplugs

LIGHT

- ☐ Very dark
- ☐ Small night light
- ☐ Warm / dim light
- ☐ Eye mask

TOUCH

- ☐ Heavy bedding
- ☐ Light bedding
- ☐ Soft textures
- ☐ Cool / smooth textures

TEMPERATURE

- ☐ Cool room
- ☐ Warm room
- ☐ Fresh air
- ☐ Warm feet / body

NOTICE

Something my sleep space needs more - or less - of

Include any sensory preference not listed above: smell, movement, pressure, textures, objects, sound or anything else.



Making the Transition to Bed Easier

For some people, the hardest part is not sleep itself - it is stopping, switching tasks and moving from an engaging activity into bedtime.

Instead of relying on motivation or suddenly stopping, try creating a bridge between 'doing' and 'sleeping'. External cues can reduce how much your brain has to remember or initiate by itself.

Transition supports I could try

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ A bedtime alarm | ☐ A second 'start winding down' alarm |
| ☐ A visual routine | ☐ A short written checklist |
| ☐ Automatic dimming / night mode | ☐ Prepare bedtime items earlier |
| ☐ Finish at a natural stopping point | ☐ Use the same transition activity |
| ☐ Ask someone to prompt me | ☐ Set a timer before hyperfocus activities |

TRY

My transition bridge

What could happen between your current activity and getting into bed?

My cue to begin: _____

The first small step: _____

Something calming / familiar: _____

Then I move towards bed: _____

NOTICE

Do I Need Less Stimulation - or the Right Stimulation?



Some brains settle with quiet. Others become more restless when there is too little input. The aim is to find your own 'settling zone'.

A strategy is useful if it helps you become calmer and sleepier without pulling you into another hour of alertness. Familiar, predictable stimulation may feel very different from exciting or rapidly changing stimulation.

TOO STIMULATING

- ☐ Fast scrolling
- ☐ Exciting games
- ☐ Work / problem-solving
- ☐ Bright or changing content

HELPS ME SETTLE

- ☐ Familiar programme
- ☐ Calm audio
- ☐ Simple repetitive activity
- ☐ Something else: _____

REFLECT

My settling zone

What gives you enough input to feel comfortable without making you more awake?

My Neurodivergent-Friendly Sleep Plan



Build around what you have learned about your attention, sensory needs and transitions. Flexible support is still a routine.

MY TIME CUE

How will I notice it is getting late?

MY TRANSITION CUE

What helps me stop or switch activity?

MY SENSORY SET-UP

What does my body need from the room / bedding?

MY SETTLING INPUT

Quiet, audio, familiar content, movement or something else?

MY BACK-UP VERSION

What can I do when the full routine feels impossible?

REMEMBER

The best routine is not the most impressive one. It is the one that reduces friction and gives your brain enough support to move towards rest.



My 7-Night Sleep Support Experiment

Test one or two supports at a time. You are looking for patterns in what makes bedtime easier, not trying to perform a perfect routine.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Used a transition support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sensory set-up felt right	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5
Bedtime felt easier	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5	☐ 1-5

Tick the first row. For the last two, write 1-5 inside the circle (1 = not at all, 5 = very).

What did I learn about my sleep needs?

A SENSORY NEED I NOTICED

A TRANSITION THAT HELPED

SOMETHING I WILL ADJUST

SOMETHING I WILL KEEP

Different does not mean wrong. A sleep routine can include sensory supports, reminders, familiar stimulation and flexible steps if those are what help your nervous system settle.