



SLEEP WORKBOOK 07

Sleep & the Racing Mind

A practical workbook for understanding bedtime thoughts, reducing mental overload and finding ways to help your mind settle.

NOTICE • UNLOAD • TRY

A busy mind at bedtime does not mean you are failing at sleep. When the day becomes quiet, thoughts that had little room earlier can suddenly feel much louder. This workbook helps you notice those patterns and experiment with ways to give your thoughts somewhere to go.

This workbook belongs to:



Why Does My Brain Wake Up at Bedtime?

When external stimulation drops away, your attention may turn inward. Planning, memories, worries and ideas can suddenly become much more noticeable.

The goal is not to force your mind to become completely blank. It is to understand what it is doing and find ways to reduce the pressure to hold, solve or remember everything while you are trying to sleep.

What tends to arrive when the lights go out?

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Planning tomorrow | ☐ Replaying conversations |
| ☐ Remembering forgotten jobs | ☐ Worrying about what might happen |
| ☐ Imaginary conversations | ☐ Creative ideas |
| ☐ Problem-solving | ☐ Random thoughts / mental jumping |
| ☐ Things I wish I had said | ☐ Body sensations |
| ☐ Things I need to look up | ☐ Something else |

REFLECT

My brain usually gets busiest with...

You do not need to explain or solve it here. Simply notice what repeatedly takes up mental space.



What Kind of Busy Brain Do I Have?

Tick or colour any patterns that feel familiar. You may recognise several - and your pattern can change from one night to another.



THE PLANNER

Runs through tomorrow, schedules, lists and what needs doing.



THE REPLAYER

Revisits conversations, moments or decisions from earlier.



THE WORRIER

Moves towards uncertainty, possible problems or 'what if?' thoughts.



THE PROBLEM-SOLVER

Keeps searching for answers even when nothing needs solving tonight.



THE IDEA GENERATOR

Produces creative ideas, projects or sudden inspiration.



THE RANDOM THOUGHT MACHINE

Jumps between unrelated thoughts, memories, songs or questions.

REMEMBER

These are patterns, not personality types. Naming what your mind is doing can make it easier to choose a response that actually fits the moment.



Get It Out of My Head

A brain dump is not about producing a perfect to-do list. It gives thoughts somewhere external to live so your mind does not have to keep rehearsing them.

THINGS I NEED TO REMEMBER

Jobs, appointments, messages or practical reminders.

I CAN DEAL WITH THIS TOMORROW

Things that matter, but do not need solving tonight.

THINGS I'M WORRIED ABOUT

Write the thought down without needing to find an answer.

IDEAS I DON'T WANT TO LOSE

Creative thoughts, plans or things to revisit later.

ANYTHING ELSE

Anything else taking up space in my head...



Thoughts That Feel Urgent at Night

Night-time thoughts can feel unusually important simply because they have your full attention. Sorting them can help separate genuine action from mental urgency.

NEEDS ACTION NOW

Something genuinely time-sensitive or safety-related.

CAN WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW

Important, but there is no benefit to solving it in bed.

WRITE IT DOWN

I mainly need reassurance that I will remember it.

OUTSIDE MY CONTROL

There may be nothing useful I can do about this tonight.

REFLECT

What would I tell myself about this thought during the daytime?

Imagine meeting the same thought when you are rested and have more perspective. What would you say about its urgency, importance or next step?



Build My Racing-Mind Toolkit

Different brains settle in different ways. Mark what already helps, what you might experiment with, and anything that definitely does not suit you.

	HELPS ME	MIGHT HELP	NOT FOR ME
Write a quick brain dump	☐	☐	☐
Write tomorrow's first step	☐	☐	☐
Read something familiar or gentle	☐	☐	☐
Listen to familiar audio	☐	☐	☐
Use slow breathing	☐	☐	☐
Use sensory grounding	☐	☐	☐
Visualise a familiar place	☐	☐	☐
Try a repetitive mental task	☐	☐	☐
Get briefly out of bed	☐	☐	☐
Keep a notebook beside the bed	☐	☐	☐

MY TOOLKIT

The two things I want to try first

Choose strategies that feel realistic. A technique is not useful simply because it is labelled 'relaxing' - it needs to work for you.



My 7-Night Mind-Settling Experiment

Choose one or two strategies and notice what happens. This is an experiment, not a test - a strategy can be useful even if it only helps a little.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Mind busyness before (1-5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Used my chosen strategy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Settling felt easier	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

For the rating rows, write 1-5 inside the circle. For the strategy row, simply tick the circle if you tried it.

What did I discover?

WHAT HELPED MOST?

WHAT MADE THINGS WORSE?

WHAT SURPRISED ME?

WHAT WILL I KEEP USING?
