



SLEEP WORKBOOK 08

Sleep Pressure & Sleepiness

A practical workbook for noticing when your body is genuinely ready for sleep and building habits that support natural sleepiness.

NOTICE • LEARN • EXPERIMENT

Feeling exhausted is not always the same as feeling sleepy. This workbook helps you recognise your own signs of sleepiness, understand the build-up of sleep pressure across the day, and experiment gently with the things that may strengthen or weaken it.

This workbook belongs to:



Tired, Sleepy or Both?

Tiredness can mean low energy, overwhelm or physical exhaustion. Sleepiness is the body's increasing readiness to fall asleep. They often overlap, but they are not always the same.

You might feel drained all evening but become more alert once you get into bed. Learning your personal signs of genuine sleepiness can make bedtime feel less like something you have to force.

When I am genuinely sleepy, I notice...

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Heavy eyelids | ☐ Yawning |
| ☐ Eyes struggling to focus | ☐ Body feels heavier |
| ☐ Thoughts become slower | ☐ I lose track while reading |
| ☐ I want to close my eyes | ☐ I become quieter |
| ☐ Head nodding / drifting | ☐ Warm or cosy feeling |
| ☐ Less interest in what I am doing | ☐ Something else |

REFLECT

How do I know the difference between tired and sleepy?

How Sleep Pressure Builds

Sleep pressure generally increases the longer you are awake. Think of it as a gradual build-up of the body's need for sleep rather than an on/off switch.



Sleep pressure is only one part of sleep. Your body clock, health, medication, stress, environment and many other factors can affect when sleep arrives. The aim here is simply to notice one useful piece of the picture.

My usual day

WAKE	When do I usually get up?	
DAYTIME	When is my energy highest?	
DIP	When do I naturally slow down?	
SLEEPY	When do I first notice sleepiness?	
BED	When do I usually get into bed?	

NOTICE

Is there a gap between when I first feel genuinely sleepy and when I actually try to sleep? What usually happens during that gap?



What Might Be Changing My Sleepiness?

There is no need to label habits as good or bad. Instead, notice what seems to strengthen, delay or mask your own feeling of sleepiness.

MAY BUILD SLEEP PRESSURE

- ☐ Being awake through the day
- ☐ Physical / mental activity
- ☐ A consistent wake time
- ☐ Daylight and daytime routine

MAY REDUCE IT

- ☐ Napping
- ☐ Dozing in the evening
- ☐ Sleeping much later
- ☐ Long periods in bed awake

MAY MASK SLEEPINESS

- ☐ Bright screens / stimulation
- ☐ Interesting activities
- ☐ Caffeine later in the day
- ☐ Pushing through a sleepy window

MY OWN PATTERNS

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

REFLECT

Something that may be affecting my sleepiness is...

NOTICE

Am I Going to Bed Because I'm Sleepy?



Bedtime can be guided by the clock, habit, another person's routine or simply wanting the day to be over. Notice what usually sends you to bed.

I tend to go to bed because...

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ I am genuinely sleepy | ☐ It is my usual bedtime |
| ☐ My partner is going to bed | ☐ I am exhausted / overwhelmed |
| ☐ I am bored | ☐ I want some quiet time |
| ☐ I think I should be asleep | ☐ I have to wake early |
| ☐ I am trying to catch up on sleep | ☐ I want the day to end |
| ☐ I fall asleep elsewhere first | ☐ It varies a lot |

TRY THIS QUESTION

Right now, am I tired - or am I actually sleepy?

There is no correct answer. The question is simply a cue to check what your body is communicating before automatically moving into bed.

MY SLEEPY WINDOW

When I notice genuine sleepiness, what usually helps me follow it rather than accidentally becoming alert again?

My Sleepiness Experiment

Choose one small change that may help you notice or protect your natural sleepy window. Avoid turning it into another rigid sleep rule.



- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Keep my wake time more consistent | ☐ Notice when I first become sleepy |
| ☐ Reduce accidental evening dozing | ☐ Review when / how long I nap |
| ☐ Dim stimulation when sleepiness arrives | ☐ Avoid starting a very absorbing task late |
| ☐ Spend less awake time in bed | ☐ Something personal to me |

MY EXPERIMENT

The one change I want to test

I will try this for: ____ nights

KEEP IT FLEXIBLE

If your body needs a nap, extra rest or a different schedule because of illness, disability, caring responsibilities, shift work or another reason, this workbook is not asking you to ignore that. Use the experiment only where it feels appropriate for your circumstances.

What would make this experiment realistic for me?



My 7-Night Sleepiness Experiment

Track what you notice rather than trying to achieve a perfect bedtime. Look for patterns between genuine sleepiness, your chosen experiment and settling for sleep.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Noticed genuine sleepiness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tried my chosen change	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Settling felt easier	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tick the circles when they apply. For 'settling felt easier', you can write 1-5 inside the circle if you want a simple rating.

What did I discover?

WHEN WAS I MOST SLEEPY?

WHAT SEEMED TO DELAY IT?

WHAT HELPED ME NOTICE IT?

WHAT WILL I KEEP?
