

I developed this handout for people who have received context for their sleep-related lifestyle medicine habits: my coaching/healing clients, Meditation & Resiliency students, and professional workshops. This is not intended for broad distribution or for others to post on social media. Please contact me at: info@annieweisbrod.com

Going to sleep & going back to sleep – practice notes

- Waking up in the middle of the night can be normal, not necessarily insomnia. Studies show that humans naturally sleep in segments, sleeping in 2 - 4 hour phases, and we may wake up in the middle for an hour or two. Historically, people would use this time to reflect on their dreams, pray, interact with spouse or infant or pet, walk the perimeter of camp... The natural dark period is up to 14-hours, which is when we slept and rested. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-16964783>
- Studies also show that today, quite a few people are chronically sleep-deprived, which has detrimental physiological and cognitive consequences. Adults (18-64 years old) need 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Different periods of development may require more, see: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/excessive-sleepiness/support/how-much-sleep-do-we-really-need>.

'Sleep hygiene' tips from the U.S. National Sleep Foundation (<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>):

- Maintain a regular bed and wake time.
- Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine (soothing bath, read a book, soft music...)
- Create a sleep-conducive environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.
- Sleep on a comfortable mattress, with or without pillows.
- Use your bedroom only for sleep and sex. (Use electronics and work elsewhere so the bedroom means 'time to sleep' to the body)
- Finish eating 2+ hours before bed.
- Exercise regularly. Finish 2+ hours before bed.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, screen time, alcohol, marijuana etc close to bedtime. *(People have different sensitivities, so be aware that caffeine might stay in your system over 10 hours.)*

If you do all these basic 'sleep hygiene' steps and continue to have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, try one of these calming activities that people find successful:

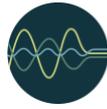
1. Concentrate on diaphragmatic breathing – take deep long breaths, relax the belly so the diaphragm can move freely (try to not breath as much in the upper chest). Focus on having longer exhales than inhales.
2. Body scan – feel inside your body - top to bottom or bottom to top. Become aware of, or even squeeze/tense and release each body part (e.g. toes), then move to next body part (e.g. ankle).
3. Visualize something boring and peaceful – imagine and count sheep walking in a line in a pasture; watch waves on the edge of a beach; imagine a big tree with leaves moving



I developed this handout for people who have received context for their sleep-related lifestyle medicine habits: my coaching/healing clients, Meditation & Resiliency students, and professional workshops. This is not intended for broad distribution or for others to post on social media. Please contact me at: info@annieweisbrod.com

in a gentle wind; feel each breath move in and out; count your breaths (go up to 1, 3, 5, 10, or whatever); focus on feeling your tongue or your pulse...

4. Mantra practice – focus the mind on something kind and rhythmic, a short phrase is best. Mantra options to try (choose one below or find another one, repeat for 5-15 minutes):
 - Peace, Love, Joy, Grace
 - May all beings have peace
 - Om Mani Padme Hum (*Compassion for all beings*)
 - Om Tari Tutari Turi Soha (*Wisdom and compassion*)
 - Nam Myoho Renge Kyo (*Transformation; vow to not yield to being consumed by difficulties, and to discover a way to joy, peace, freedom.*)
 - Gate, Gate, Para gate, Par sum gate, Bodhi soha (*Go beyond, go beyond, go further beyond, go even further beyond that. Open, Grow, 'don't know'.*)
 - Using a mantra in another language is helpful so the mind does not attach to the words. Key is find a rhythm when saying it that matches the breath, heartbeat or something else. We focus on the mantra instead of the distracting ruminations or worries. We open the heart and breathe deeply.
 - You can use your fingers to cycle through a beaded necklace or bracelet (e.g. mala, rosary, mardi gras beads...) while repeating the mantra. Turn one bead for each repetition of the mantra.
5. If you are worrying about something, imagine 'the problem' solved or 'make a deal' with yourself to pick it up at X time tomorrow. Create an agreement within yourself that sleep is more important than ruminating; sleep is what we are doing now.
6. If you are awake for more than 20 min, get up. Do something slow and boring, in dark/low light. Change sleeping location. Stretch while on the floor. Go to the kitchen, drink a glass of water, sit in a chair and drink very slowly for 5-10 min. Write 'it' down and let it go.... do not use electronics (blue light is stimulating). Then go back to bed.
7. Stretch. Stretch while sitting on the floor, bed or a chair. Hold each stretch for 5 or more deep long breaths. Breath in - spine extends long; breath out - settle the body into the ground. Stretch the sides of your body, arms, hips, legs, back and neck.
 - Examples: Legs straight in front – bend forward to gently reach for shins or toes. Legs open to straddle, bend forward again – bending the knees will relieve strain for some people. Sit cross legged – ankle on knee or shin. Bend forward. Side bends - arm reaches over head with the other hand supporting on the floor. Roll head forward and to each side (careful if leaning head back, support the neck with fingers). Twist on each side. Arch back, supporting with hands behind on floor or on lower back.



I developed this handout for people who have received context for their sleep-related lifestyle medicine habits: my coaching/healing clients, Meditation & Resiliency students, and professional workshops. This is not intended for broad distribution or for others to post on social media. Please contact me at: info@annieweisbrod.com

8. Listen to sounds designed to aid relaxation. Using a sound machine for white or pink noise, ocean waves, or natural flowing water sounds can be effective. Song examples are “Weightless” developed by Marconi Union in collaboration with the British Academy of Sound Therapy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfcAVEjslrU> or “Electra” by Airstream, which uses beats to match an ideal relaxed heart beat (60-65 bpm) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gx38GBOZ6PU>

Waking may be due to noise, caffeine or other stimulants, hunger, alcohol, depression, or other physical symptoms (e.g., hot flash, restless legs, pain)....

- Test yourself and your tolerance to stimulants. Do not ingest anything with caffeine after noon and see if that helps you to fall asleep more easily at night. Sugar and exercise might also be stimulating, so refrain from them at least 2 hours before bed.
- Pain – explore and pay attention to what exactly that is. Change your lifestyle to truly resolve or reduce what causes the pain. Work with your health care team/physician.
- Rumination (swirling in your head), tension, depression, anxiety, worry. If the tips above are insufficient, consider working with a counselor / coach in cognitive behavioral therapy and/or emotional recognition and management techniques. Work with your health care team/therapist, meditation teacher, Annie etc.
- Hunger, try: Chamomile tea, Valerian Root tea, warm milk, turkey, cherries, oatmeal, bananas, wine (small amount).
- Alcohol helps us fall to sleep but also stimulates the brain and can wake us up. Use in moderation.
- There are medical sleep disorders. Ask your physician for a referral for diagnosis & treatment.

Some articles you might be interested in:

<http://www.livescience.com/12891-natural-sleep.html>

<http://www.the-sleep-guide.com/wake-up-in-middle-of-night.html>

<http://www.uncommonhelp.me/articles/how-to-go-back-to-sleep/>

If you suspect that you have a sleep pathology (e.g. sleep apnea), contact your General Practice physician to be referred to a specialized sleep program or physician for tests and medically-based solutions. Modern medicine provides numerous solutions that can be very effective when used in combination with the approaches above.