

Adult Mental Health Services  
Stabilisation Workbook 6

# Food and sleep: Attending to our basic needs



## Introduction

As humans, we all have a range of basic needs, which must be fulfilled to maintain our health and wellbeing. When these are not fulfilled, both physical and mental health will suffer. This workbook focuses on two of these vital human needs – food and sleep – and how to make positive changes in both of these areas to support overall health and wellbeing.



**With thanks to Dr Eleanor Chadwick (Clinical Psychologist) for her support with this workbook.**

## Food and water

People need food like cars needs petrol – it is the main source of energy that enables the mind and body to function.

We often don't consider or take seriously enough the relationship between diet and wellbeing. Having a poor diet has been directly linked to a vast number of physical, emotional and cognitive (thinking) difficulties.

Some of these include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Mood swings
- Anger
- Poor concentration
- Irritability
- Bad skin / breakouts
- Weight loss / gain
- Brittle bones
- Feeling lethargic / tired
- Fertility problems

Making changes to diet, can for many people, significantly improve mood and overall wellbeing.



## One small change exercise

When it comes to maintaining a healthy diet, there are four key areas we need to consider.

1. Quantity – the amount of food we eat
2. Regularity – having a regular and consistent eating pattern
3. Balance – maintaining a healthy and balanced diet
4. Hydration – ensuring we drink enough water / fluid to stay hydrated

Commit to making one small change in relation to each of these areas to improve your overall mental and physical wellbeing. Simple and achievable goals will be easier to implement and maintain.

### Quantity

The amount of food our body needs to function will depend on a range of things, such as our size, age, and the amount of energy we use up during the day. The more we do, the more food we need to sustain us. Generally, the recommended daily calorie intake is 2,000 calories a day for a woman and 2,500 for a man, but this will vary from person to person. Depending on your current eating habits, your goal might include cutting down, increasing or just maintaining the amount you eat.

**Goal idea:** Cut down on unhealthy snacking of sweets and chocolate and replace with healthier options (fruit, nuts, seeds).

**My small change:**



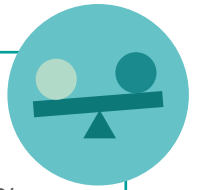
### Regularity

It is important to aim for a planned and regular eating pattern of three meals a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner. Healthy snacks in-between – as well as the occasional unhealthy snack or treat (!) – are also important. We need a regular eating pattern to maintain our blood sugar levels, and prevent sudden drops in energy and mood. This will also help to maintain a consistent and healthy weight.

**Goal idea:** Make sure to eat breakfast and don't skip this first meal of the day.

**My small change:**





## Balance

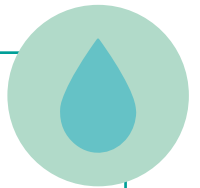
A balanced diet should include food from all three of the major food groups: carbohydrates, protein and fat. In general, most adults should aim for 45 to 65% of their diet to consist of carbohydrates, 10 to 30% protein and 20 to 35% fat.

The Eatwell Guide suggests that a healthy and balanced diet should include:

- at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day
- high fibre starchy foods like bread, potatoes, pasta or rice
- both dairy and dairy alternatives
- beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein
- unsaturated oils and spreads in small amounts.

**Goal idea:** Try and eat at least one portion of salad or vegetables with every meal.

**My small change:**



## Hydration

Did you know that 60% of your body is made up of water? Health experts currently recommend for everyone to drink eight glasses (that's two litres) of water a day, to stay hydrated and keep the body healthy.

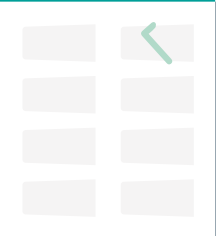
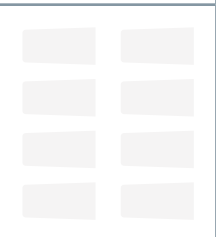
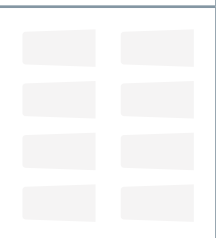
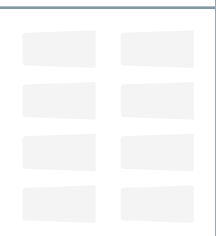
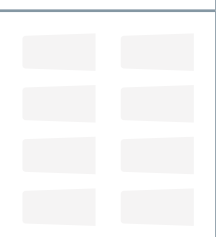

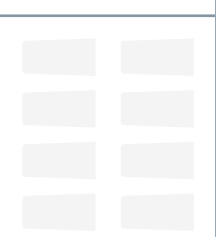
**Goal idea:** Buy a refillable water bottle to monitor how much you're drinking and ensure to have 1.5 litres a day.

**My small change:**



## Food diary

Use the diary below as a template to help you to start planning, keeping a record of and making changes to your diet. Remember to focus on the four key areas of quantity, regularity, balance and hydration.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							
Snacks							
Water (tick each glass once finished)							

## Sleep

Sleep is one of the fundamentals of life. It serves a number of important functions, including rest and recovery, memory, alertness and concentration. The average person needs six to eight hours of sleep to be at their best however, many of us do not achieve this regularly enough.

Many people have difficulty getting off to sleep, wake up frequently during the night, or wake early in the morning and are unable to get back to sleep. These difficulties are often linked to periods of stress or excitement. However, when these difficulties persist it can leave us feeling tired, tense and worried about sleep. In turn, this worry can make it even harder for us to sleep well.



Poor sleep has been linked to a range of physical and mental health difficulties, including cardiovascular (heart) problems, a depleted immune system, poor memory and concentration, poor problem-solving skills, paranoia, emotion regulation difficulties, and feelings of depression and anxiety, amongst other things. If sleep is a problem for you, why not have a look through the rest of this workbook for practical tips and ideas on improving your sleep and overall wellbeing.

## Optimising your environment for better sleep

The first step to improving sleep involves teaching our brain to associate the bedroom with sleep. Creating and maintaining the perfect sleep environment is essential to achieving the best possible quality sleep.

Keep your room as dark as possible at night and block out sunlight with blinds, curtains or you could try wearing an eye mask.



Try to get a mattress, pillows and bedding that feel comfortable and supportive to you.

Your room should make you feel relaxed and peaceful – choose colours, scents and decorations you love and try to keep the space clean and tidy.

Keep your bed only for sleep so that your mind associates it with sleeping and relaxing. Make sure the place where you work at home is not in your bed – use a desk or a different room.



Turn down the thermostat – most people sleep better in a cool room. Experiment to find your ideal temperature.



Artificial light can disrupt your body's sleep clock. Remove the TV, computer and other mind-stimulating blue light from the bedroom. If your phone is your alarm clock, flip it face down.





## Planning helpful change

Take a moment to think about your current bedroom / sleep environment. Visualise what it looks like, where everything is, the different textures, sounds and smells. What small changes could you make to your sleep environment to promote rest? How will you achieve this?

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## The pro-sleep schedule

One of the most powerful ways to improve sleep is to get into a consistent sleep routine. Set a regular wake up and bed time each day and stick to it to develop a better sleeping pattern.



### Build a wind down routine

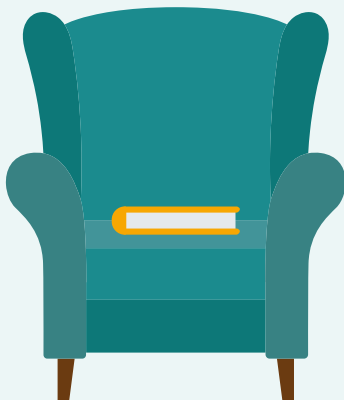
To prepare our bodies and brains for sleep we need to give ourselves time before bed to unwind and relax. Make this a priority and set aside up to an hour or two for winding down.

Plan activities that you enjoy, and that are relaxing in a passive way. Reading, going for a stroll or listening to music would all fit the bill. Avoid activities that leave you pumped up – strenuous exercise or a gripping movie for example.



### Try some relaxation

You might find that relaxation and mindfulness help you to wind down and relax before bed. Take a look at the exercises in the 'Breathing and Relaxation' and 'Mindfulness' workbooks and give breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, mindful body scan and / or visualising a peaceful scene a go.



### Get up if you can't sleep

Sometimes sleep just won't come or you find yourself awake in the middle of the night, staring at the ceiling. When you're awake for more than about a quarter of an hour, the best thing you can do is get up and out of bed. This helps keep your bed a place for sleep.

It can be hard to persuade ourselves to get out of a warm bed during the night, so make it easier by preparing a comfy chair in the living room and leave your favourite book out.

Take your time to relax doing something you enjoy, and only return to bed when you feel sleepy (nodding off, yawning). This way, you are more likely to get to sleep quickly, rather than lying awake, staring at the ceiling.



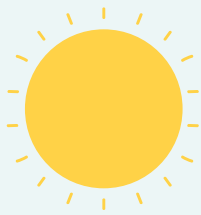
### Start the day right

Many people find it hard to get going in the morning but a good morning routine can help us to feel energised and ready for the day, as well as promote sleep at the end of the day.



### Avoid the snooze

Those initial feelings of grogginess in the morning are totally normal – it's called sleep inertia. Your brain just needs an opportunity to wake up! Hitting snooze may only leave you groggy when you wake up for a second (or third) time.



### Good morning sunshine

Morning light can help you wake up more naturally and quickly. Open those curtains to let natural sunshine in or take a few moments to step outside.



### Get moving

Moving your body during the day helps prepare for sleep at night. Moving your body by getting in a morning walk will help you wake up in the morning and sleep better that night. Don't exercise too close to bedtime as the body needs to readjust from the energising adrenaline and endorphin rush produced by exercise.





## Avoid bad habits

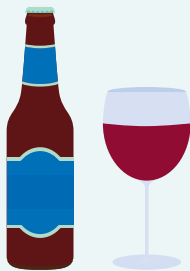
### Don't go to sleep full or hungry

Allow at least two hours after a meal before bedtime – if you are hungry, have a small snack before bed. Bear in mind that too much sugar can increase energy and drinking too much fluid before bed can mean you need to get up in the night.



### Caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant and will make you feel more alert. Allow at least five to seven hours to process the last caffeinated drink before your planned bedtime. These include coffee, tea, soft drinks and chocolate. Try herbal tea varieties to support sleep – look out for 'sleepy' or 'night-time' teas and choose decaffeinated teas or coffees.



### Alcohol

Although alcohol is a sedative and can make you feel sleepy, it can severely affect essential sleep cycles that promote restful sleep. You may fall asleep easier if you drink alcohol – but you will wake up much sooner and not feel properly rested.

Think about how much you are drinking. If you are worried about this speak to someone who will help you to get the support and advice.



### Smoking

Like caffeine, nicotine is a stimulant so try not to smoke within an hour of your bedtime or if you wake up during the night. Sleep can also be disrupted by the body's perceived need for nicotine. A craving for nicotine may not be recognised at night – instead you may find yourself craving snacks. Seek support to stop smoking – CNWL staff can help you link in to smoking cessation support.



### TVs and screens

Using a screen at night time keeps the brain energised so, for at least 30 minutes before bedtime, try to turn off the television, switch your phone to Night Mode and say goodnight to your social media accounts.

There are however, a number of apps available to aid sleep – some are included in the resources section of this workbook.

## Developing my own pro-sleep schedule

### My planned wake up time

What time do I need or want to wake up?

### My wake-up routine

What can I do when I get up to help me start the day with energy?

### My planned bedtime

What time do I need to go to bed to get my optimal sleep window?

I will start winding down for bed ..... minutes before my bedtime.

### My winding down routine

What can I do to help slow down and rest before bed?

If I can't sleep, I should get out of bed and do something else until I feel sleepy.

My plan to help me relax during the night is:

### Breaking bad habits

Which bad habits will I avoid and how? E.g. leaving my mobile in the other room and switching off the TV at least 30 minutes before bed.

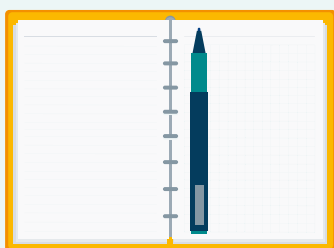
## Calm your worried mind

Most of us have experienced the occasional poor night's sleep. However, persistent poor sleep is most often triggered by negative thoughts and worries. These thoughts can cause negative emotions like stress and worry, which make it harder to sleep.



### Managing the thoughts and worries that make it difficult to sleep

If you find yourself lying in bed and not able to get off to sleep because you are worrying, why not try out some of the following strategies.



#### Start a worry journal

Keep a journal next to your bed where you can write your worries down. If you notice yourself worrying as you are trying to fall asleep, sit up and write your worries down. Let go of the worries as you close the book and re-focus your mind back to the task of falling asleep. You can come back to them tomorrow if you need to.



#### Worry time

Scheduling 'worry time' during the day can help to prevent worry at bedtime. During your scheduled worry time (5 to 60 minutes) get all the worries out of your system. This way, if the worrying thoughts come when you are in bed you can gently say, "Stop, I have already thought about this today. I can think about it again tomorrow. Now is the time to sleep."



#### Plan your next day only

Giving yourself a basic structure for the next day can help to avoid worries about what to wear, making lunches, meetings, tasks etc. Take one day at a time – planning too far in advance can increase worry. If you're struggling with excessive worry, focus on making plans for your next day only.



#### Stabilisation skills

Have a look at the following skills from the manual, which can be particularly helpful for managing night time worry:

- Breathing and relaxation exercises (Workbook 5)
- Imagery (Workbook 2)
- Distancing (Workbook 7).

## Useful links and resources

### Mind – food and mood

For useful tips on everyday living, food and mood.

**[www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/#.XEelbU9LHIU](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/#.XEelbU9LHIU)**

### The Mental Health Foundation

The following website has a great deal of information on food and its effect on our psychological wellbeing, including a chart of the foods that may help to reduce anxiety, depression, poor concentration, etc.

**[www.mentalhealth.org](http://www.mentalhealth.org)**

### The Centre for Clinical Interventions

Below is a helpful factsheet about sleep hygiene.

**[www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Sleep/Sleep%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Sleep%20Information%20Sheet%20-%2004%20-%20Sleep%20Hygiene.pdf](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Sleep/Sleep%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Sleep%20Information%20Sheet%20-%2004%20-%20Sleep%20Hygiene.pdf)**

### Get Self Help

Visit the below link for further information about sleep.

**[www.getselfhelp.co.uk/sleep.htm](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/sleep.htm)**

### Progressive muscle relaxation

The following website contains a range of audio tracks, which guide the listener through progressive muscle relaxation techniques. This involves tensing and relaxing each body part in turn, to relieve the physical aches and pains that can often accompany feelings of stress and anxiety.

**[wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/audio-resources](http://wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/audio-resources)**

### CNWL Recovery College

Check out our Recovery College timetable for upcoming workshops on sleep, exercise and healthy eating.

**[www.cnwl.nhs.uk/patients-and-carers/recovery-and-wellbeing-college](http://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/patients-and-carers/recovery-and-wellbeing-college)**

### Sleep Cycle

A free app, which tracks and measures your sleep.

### Slumber: Fall Asleep Insomnia

A subscribed app with mindfulness sleep stories, relaxing music and nature sounds.

### Calm

A subscribed app with sleep stories and relaxation exercises.

### White Noise Sleep Pillow Sound

A free app of sleep sounds.

### Sleep with Me

A podcast to aid sleep.



