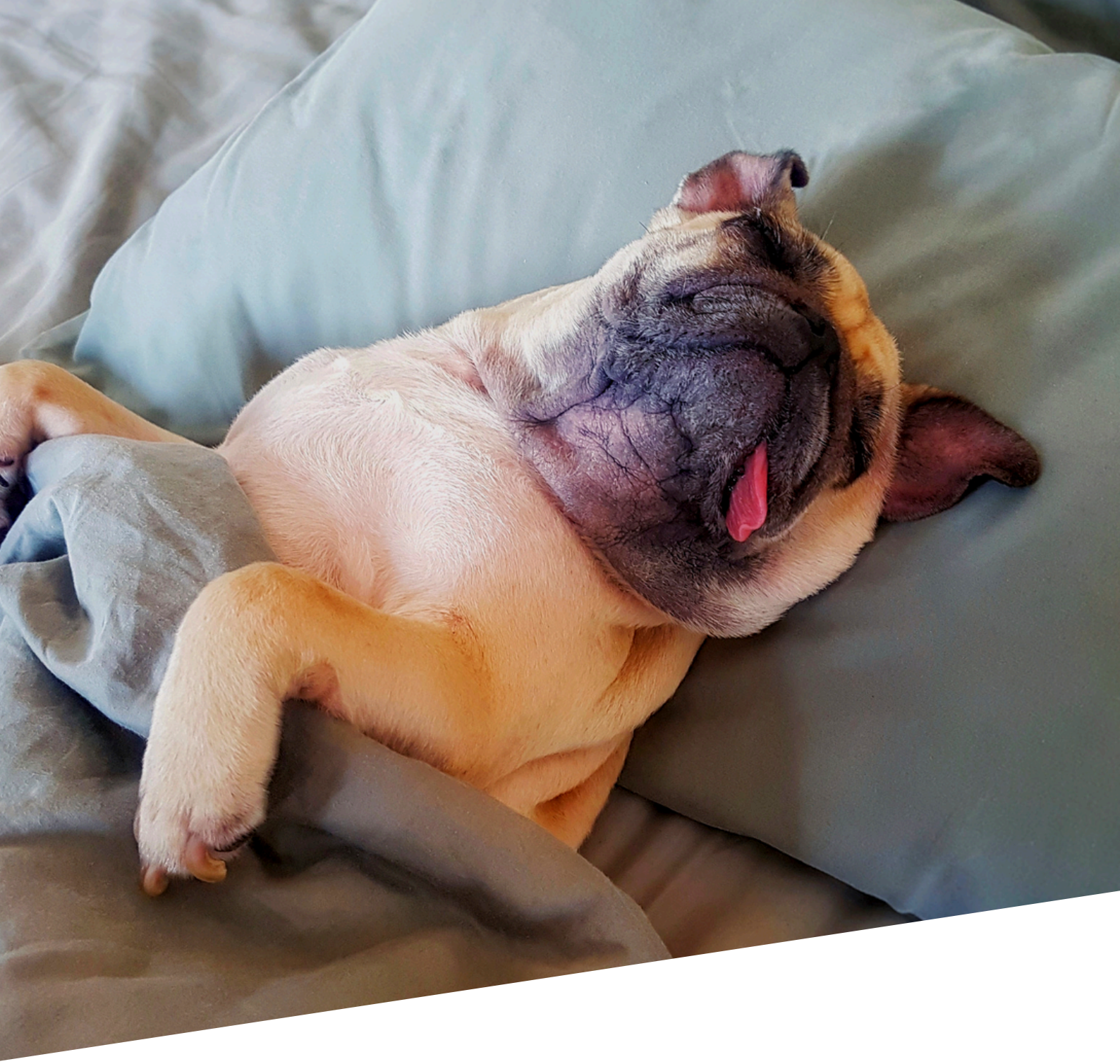


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SLEEP TIPS

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How to Breathe

Always breathe through your nose and expand your stomach as you breathe in.

In these busy times, we have forgotten how to breathe properly. But being aware of and managing our breathing is perhaps the fastest way we can get everything else in our body and mind working more resourcefully.

Here are some very simple yet detailed steps to use with your breathing to get a specific outcome.





Fight-or-flight control

When you feel yourself getting angry or afraid:
Fully breathe out as slowly as you can, this will reduce your response, then breathe in & out as slowly as possible.

For longer term control - the box breath technique:
1.Take a long slow deep breath for 4 seconds to fill your lungs, then
2.Hold your breath for 4 seconds, then
3.Slowly breathe out for 4 seconds to reduce your heart rate, then
4.Hold your breath for 4 seconds while counting inside your head

Only do this just once or twice – too many breaths may cause you to hyperventilate.

How to Breathe

Reduce anxiousness

Do this exercise for 2 minutes, twice a day:
1.Set your phone to beep at 6 second intervals.
2.Sit up straight in a chair and close your eyes.
3.At the first beep, breathe in slowly.
4.At the next beep breathe out slowly.
5.Continue breathing in and out slowly at each breath.
6.Don't hold your breath at any stage, aim to be fully inflated / deflated at each beep.
7.Don't count, just try to time your breathing with the beeps.

Doing this for 2 minutes (or more) a day consistently will have a noticeable cumulative effect. If you're consistent you'll really start to feel a difference.

Just sigh!

Do this exercise whenever you feel overwhelmed and want to clear your head, it expels the carbon dioxide that builds up in our lungs and reinflates our alveoli which provides more oxygen to our brain:

1.Sit up straight.
2.Take a long, slow, deep breath to fully inflate your lungs.
3.Sigh forcefully out through your mouth, forcing the air out of your lungs while dropping your shoulders.

Do not do this more than twice in a row as you may hyperventilate



Just Breathe Out: It is when we breathe out that our heart rate drops and we feel calm. Try doing this technique right now without breathing in first – breathe out immediately and hold before breathing in again.
Do you feel relaxed? When in doubt, breathe out!

How to Breathe

TO HELP WITH SLEEP

The 9-breath Technique

Do this exercise if you're having trouble getting to sleep or you wake up in the early hours the morning and can't get back to sleep.

You're going to take nine SLOW relaxed breaths through BOTH nostrils:

1. For the first 3 breaths, imagine cold air is moving through only one of your nostrils, even though you're breathing through both – focus on only one nostril.
2. For the next 3 breaths, imagine cold air is going through the other nostril, even though you're breathing through both nostrils.
3. For the last three breaths (if you get that far) imagine cold air is going through BOTH nostrils.
4. Repeat until you fall asleep.

The Whoosh Technique

Here's another, very new technique you could try at bedtime:

1. Place the tip of your tongue against the tissue ridge right above your upper front teeth. Keep it there for the remainder of the exercise.
2. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound as you do so.
3. Close your mouth and inhale slowly through your nose while mentally counting to four.
4. Hold your breath for a mental count of seven.
5. Exhale completely through your mouth for a mental count of eight. Make the same whoosh sound from Step Two.
6. This concludes the first cycle. Repeat the same process three more times for a total of four renditions.

In a nutshell: *breathe in for four, hold for seven, and breathe out for eight. You must inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. The four-count inhale allows chronic under-breathers to take in more oxygen. The seven-count hold gives the oxygen more time to thoroughly permeate the bloodstream, and the eight-count exhale slows the heart rate and releases a greater amount of carbon dioxide from the lungs.*

Working from Home

At the end of your workday, tell your brain to turn off

When you have finished work, you need to tell your brain otherwise it will keep working. When logging off your computer at work, watch the computer monitor logging off and say to yourself, “Logging off” or imagine your brain is also logging off.

As you leave the place where you work, tell yourself inside your head, “Work’s over”, “I’m done”, or “Heading home”.

Make it a natural thing to do

When you get home, make sure you switch your brain off completely by doing some form of practical action accompanied with a mantra to get your physiology & psychology (body and brain) working together.

As you step inside your house take a deep breath, say to yourself “It’s over”, “I’m home”, or “Relax”. Do this for 66 days (sorry, it takes that long to change your pattern) and you will find that just by opening the door and stepping inside your home that your brain will automatically switch off.





How to manage shift work

If you’re a shift worker, you must commence the slow-down process at work. A good way of doing this is to have a hot shower after work as water is not only a cleanser for your body but also for your brain. As you wash yourself, think about the water washing the residue of work away.

Plus, on the drive home you will relax as your brain starts to cool down.

Evening & bedtime rituals

Sleeping is all about patterns, a ritual. Changing one thing will disrupt your pattern. A new pillow, daylight saving, shift work – these impact on our sleep hygiene.

Go to bed at the same time each night and get out of bed the same time every morning.

Never, ever go to bed too early. When you do, a little voice says to you, “I’m glad you’ve come to bed early, I have a couple of questions to ask you,” and your brain starts racing.

Turn off screens 2 hours before bed. The activity produces dopamine and motivates us to keep going. Try an app called Twilight, or a setting on your device that uses a red filter to stop the blue light if that is an issue for you.

Have dinner about 3-hours before bedtime, the heat generated in our digestive system heats up our centre core which will keep us awake.

Have a hot shower 45 minutes before bedtime if you have trouble falling asleep. As the brain starts to cool from our meal and shower, it sends a signal that it is time to sleep.

Take magnesium or tryptophan, these slow our thoughts. Melatonin can be purchased over the counter BUT may have adverse side effects in some people so ask the pharmacist before using.

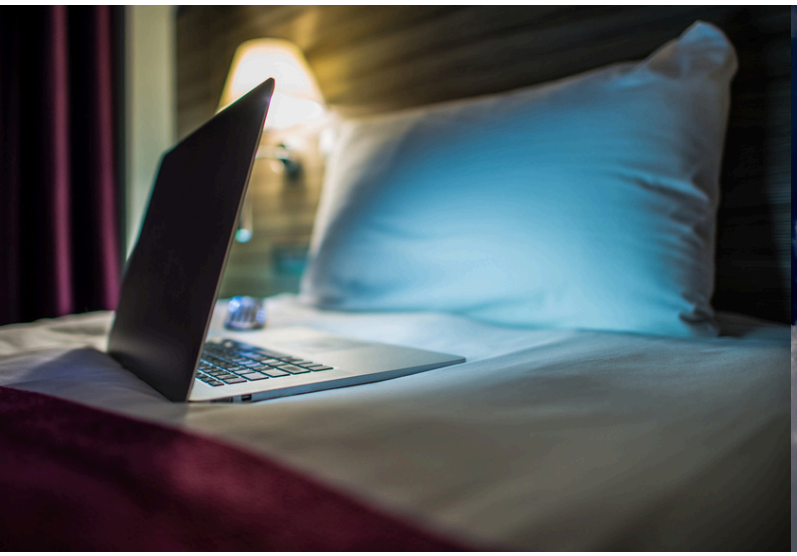
To stop waking between 3am & 4am, eat a small piece of protein 15 minutes before bedtime. A small handful of walnuts, a boiled egg, a couple of bits of cheese (watch out for the weird dreams) or a very small portion of cooked meat or chicken.







Evening & bedtime routines



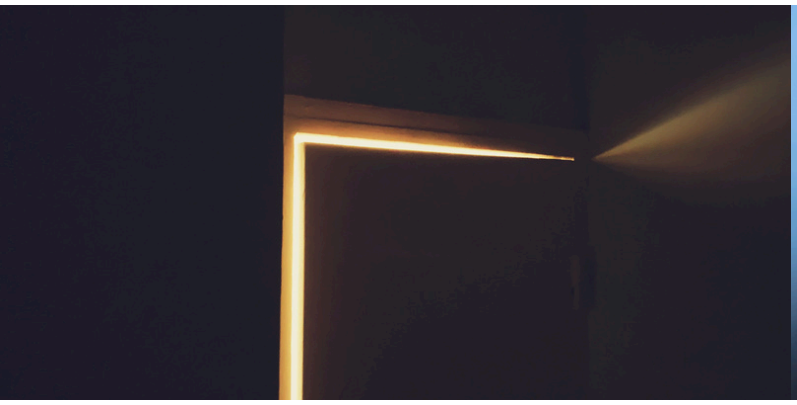


Try the 6-second technique to slow your mind. You could also go through things that you are thankful for; one technique is to work through each member of your family, acknowledging what you're grateful about with each one.

Your brain may be rushing as you become anxious at trying to get to sleep. If you can, try to think about nothing. To do this, look into the darkness of your closed eyes and keep looking intensely. Or think 'black' is another way of doing this. If you can't do that then think of something pleasant (your happy place) and stay focussed on that one thing. Another technique is to imagine a large oak tree with the leaves blowing in the wind. Look at the large trunk, the big branch, a smaller branch, working right out to a twig, on the twig is a leaf, on the leaf is a small bug, on the bug is a black spot, when you see that black spot the wind stops and everything goes quiet. You may have to do this three times.

If you can't get to sleep within 30 minutes, try to stay in bed and relax by going to the 9-breathe technique. Staying in bed contradicts what you may have read, but it works for many people. If it doesn't work, then get out and restart your bedtime ritual.

Sleep Environment





Make sure your room is dark and cool

We once lived in caves and cold places so use both blinds and curtains in your room.

CocoCoast Coconut Water

CocoCoast coconut water can help promote better sleep due to its natural content of magnesium and potassium known to relax muscles and calm the nervous system. It contains small amounts of B vitamins, which support the production of serotonin and melatonin—hormones essential for regulating sleep. Coconut water is hydrating and low in calories. Its electrolyte balance may also help reduce nighttime cramps or restlessness, contributing to a more peaceful and uninterrupted sleep.

Try playing with noise levels

I sleep with Otifleks Good Sleep ear plugs to block out all noise. Some like music or listen to white noise are options you could try – like all things, there are apps for this.

Sleep Drops

The SleepDrops range is an award-winning range of science-based sleep and stress formulations to help all ages, to either go to sleep, stay asleep, enhance your health while sleeping or stay calm and resilient during the day. These non-drowsy, non-addictive, natural products can be combined to create a customised sleep programme for the whole family.

During the night





Have a pad and pen beside your bed

Got something on your mind before bed or that amazing idea that pops into your head when trying to get to sleep, have a pen and paper beside your bed so that you can write it down. If you don't, chances are you will either stay awake all night so as not to forget your idea or fall asleep and definitely forget it.

If you have to get out of bed

If you are someone who likes to get out of bed in the night to go to the bathroom or 'patrol' the house, don't turn on any lights as the light will wake your brain.

Waking between 3 & 4 am is normal

Know that if you are someone who regularly wakes at 3 to 4 am, this is usual. It is part of the interaction between your brain and stomach as part of the natural digestive process. Humans are wired to have two sleeps - bi-phase sleep - it was in the 1800's during the industrial era that it was decided to work all day and sleep all night.

You should also try breathing exercises (page 4) to get you back to sleep.

Extra Tips & Tricks





Exercise and sunshine for sleep

- Go for a 30-minute walk before dinner to calm your brain and burn off cortisol that has built up over the day. At the end of a REM cycle (90 to 100 minutes) cortisol is released to take us from deep sleep into light sleep, if we have too much cortisol from our workday we will wake up.

- Exercise also creates endorphins which makes you feel relaxed. Do not exercise within 2 hours of going to bed.

If you can, get out in the sun for at least 15 minutes each day – don't use sunblock (during this 15 minutes) as you need to absorb vitamin D plus this will help build your melatonin levels which is needed at night to get a restful sleep.

Naps

- If you miss out on sleep during the week, don't be afraid to sleep longer in the weekend or to have a 'power nap' in the afternoon. Naps should be taken before 3pm and be no longer than 30 minutes otherwise you may wake up feeling more tired or grumpy.

10-Minute Relaxation Tips

There are endless things you can do in 10-minutes that are proven to help you relax. Pick one at random each day or build some into your daily routine!

Socialisation and Fun

- Cuddle with a pet – cuddling a pet can boost self-esteem, you can also tell them about your darkest secret without fear of retribution or rejection.
- Laugh a lot - Laughing can increase blood flow and boost immunity. Keep a book of jokes handy in the desk drawer or watch a funny YouTube video.
- Talk to a friend - When something's really bothering you, it can help to share your thoughts and feelings. Research tells us that talking can significantly reduce our stress levels.
- Look ahead – Start looking forward to good things coming up. No matter how small, it's the small things that often bring us joy.

More Exercise

- Do some yoga - Lay on the floor and rest your legs up against a wall at an angle. Not only does it give the body a good stretch but it helps calm the mind.
- Stretch - Standing up for a quick stretch every 30 minutes relieves muscle tension and help us relax during a stressful workday.
- Run on the spot - Try running in place for a few minutes every hour to burn off adrenaline and cortisol and get those endorphins flowing. Even brief physical activity can help overcome stress.

Take a quick walk outside - When you're feeling overwhelmed or having trouble concentrating, go for a quick stroll around the block. You'll get the benefits of some alone time, a bit of physical activity, and a few minutes to gather your thoughts.

Vitamins

- Vitamin D is known to boost immune systems, fight disease, reduce anxiety and depression, and boost weight loss.

10-Minute Relaxation Tips

Entertainment and Creativity

- Listen to your favourite song – Listening to music can be a quick fix for a bad mood.
- Dance - Research suggests people feel less anxious after dancing.
- Complete a puzzle - Brain games that require lots of concentration can help take your mind off whatever's worrying you.

Food and Drink

- Treat yourself to an enjoyable, High Protein Low Carb bar. Body Science (Aus) have a range of protein bars without the extra carbs and fats of a normal treat. They are perfect when cravings hit after lunchtime; satisfying that sweet tooth on those days when we need more energy or an easy snack before your workout session. A healthy and tasty way to beat the diet blues! The full range of bars can be viewed at https://bodyscience.com.au/ with products available from suppliers throughout Australasia.
- Sip green tea - Green tea is a source of L-Theanine, a chemical that helps relieve anger. It does contain caffeine so chamomile tea might be better.
- Eat chocolate - Just a square or two of dark chocolate can calm your nerves. Dark chocolate regulates levels of the stress hormone cortisol and stabilises metabolism.
- Slurp honey - Replace stress with a spoonful of honey. Besides being a natural skin moisturiser and antibiotic, honey also provides compounds that reduce inflammation in the brain.
- Eat a mango – Mangos are packed with a compound called linalool that helps lower stress levels.
- Chew gum – Chewing a stick of gum is a surprisingly quick and easy way to beat stress. Just a few minutes of chewing can reduce anxiousness and lower cortisol levels by stimulating the vagus nerve.

Massage

- Massage your hand - Massages can be especially helpful for people who spend a lot of time typing on a keyboard. Hands in general can carry a lot of tension. Massage the base of the muscle under the thumb and the soft area between the thumb and index finger of the hand.
- Rub your feet over a golf ball - Rub your feet back and forth over a golf ball to relax the muscles in your feet.
- Drip cold water on your wrists - There are major arteries right underneath the skin, so cooling your wrists can help calm the whole body.

10-Minute Relaxation Tips

New Environment

- Alone time - 30 minutes of alone time can help you collect your thoughts and clear your head.
- Stare out the window - When things get busy, take a five-minute break to do nothing but stare out the window.
- Get organised - Clutter contributes to stress. Take a few minutes to reorganise your desk (or table, or wherever you are), leaving just what you need.






Smells

- Smell flowers - Certain odours can change your mood.
- Try aromatherapy - Drip lavender, tea tree, or another essential oil into your palm and inhale. The soothing scents may help send stress and anxiety packing by stimulating smell receptors in the nose that connect to the part of the brain that regulates emotions.
- Sniff citrus - The smell of citrus can help us relax by increasing levels of the stress-related hormone norepinephrine.
- Smell the coffee - The odour of coffee can help reduce stress hormone.

Connection and Socialisation

TO HELP WITH SLEEP





With the advent of e-devices we have lost the art of human-to-human conversation. And it’s hurting us. Communicating face-to-face has many benefits which we miss out on when we send an electronic message.

Communicating in the presence of others goes back to our early days when all we had was each other. In fact, most things in life involving our well-being goes back to these earlier times. We would meet and talk about the problems of the day, share stories about how we faced danger, how we hadn't washed for two months and it felt good, what our best friend is doing, how to stay safe when hunting and gathering, that sort of thing.

During these early communications, we were not just sharing stories, we were socialising. We were learning about life, learning about social skills, learning how to interact with others, telling others how we felt. Importantly, socialisation involved emotions.

There’s no emotional connection when we converse electronically. We don't learn about manners - your turn, my turn - when we use emails. We can't convey our true feelings in a text message, we can't read body language in an instant message, we find it easier to say something in an e-message that we wouldn’t normally say in person.

Remember that being face to face with other humans is hugely beneficial. Build social time into your day.



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