

## First aid for sleep problems/disorder

Sleep problems are distracting and can grow to a big problem for your daily life.

There are many possibilities, how to improve the sleep. But every new behavior needs to be trained for at least 2 or 3 weeks, to achieve an improvement. So you need to be patient.

If the sleep problems can't be regulated after a longer time, it makes sense to contact a doctor, psychologist or psychotherapist.

### Helpful behaviors, that focus directly on sleeping

- use the bed only for sleeping
- arrange your room/bed in a way that you feel comfortable there
- Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day
- rituals help your body to get prepared for sleeping: for example reading a book everytime you're going to sleep, go for walk, drink a tea or listen to music
- plan a time before sleeping (at least two hours) in which you don't work, you're not brooding and you don't do any physical activities like sports
- try not to sleep during the day time
- helpful thoughts ( `my sleep will become better soon`) instead of negative thoughts like „that will never change again“

### Helpful behaviors when sleep problems appear

- If you have problems with sleeping through the night, don't stay in bed for too long, leave the bed
- If you're brooding before you sleep or when you wake up at night, do not stay in bed to wait until you fall asleep again: listen to music, read, do relaxation- exercises or write down your thoughts on a „thoughts-list“ \*1
  - ➔ the activities should calm you down and they shouldn't be activating or disturbing
- as soon as you feel more tired again, go back to bed and try to fall asleep again
- try not to put too much pressure on falling asleep again -> that's increases the pressure and supports staying awake
- for the same reason don't check the time at night, no pressure!
- Do not eat if you wake up during the night

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\*1 Write down the thoughts which are repeating in your mind over and over and get done with them. For example with the plan: „in the next day I look at the thoughts I wrote down one by one and think about possibilities to influence these thoughts, for example look for solution and to accept to help.“ -> the goal is not to focus on these thoughts at night again

**Helpful behavior according groceries and consuming products:**

- no alcohol (minimum 3 hours before sleeping), no coffee after 3 pm.
- smoking before sleep disturbs the full night sleeps
- do not eat big meals before you go to bed

**Here are some general helpful behaviors which also improve your sleep and general positive consequences:**

- train relaxation exercises (before you practice in the evening, practice several times during the day)
- move a lot during the day
- eat healthy food

**In case of nightmares:**

- Get up or turn on the light at least once to make sure you are orientated in the room so you can make a clear difference between the nightmare and the real situation  
➔ In real life is no danger even though the dream was terrible
- Try to calm down before falling asleep again
- If you're suffering from highly effecting nightmares over and over again, you can get help from a psychotherapist