

INSOMNIA

A SELF-HELP GUIDE



Self Help for Insomnia

Insomnia is often connected with stress, anxiety, and physical tension. Ask yourself:

- Do I spend long periods worrying during the day?
 - Do I often feel nervous, restless, or tense?
 - Are small daily tasks feeling overwhelming?
 - Do I struggle to "switch off" even when I'm tired?
 - Do I experience physical symptoms like butterflies in the stomach, tense muscles, or shortness of breath?
-

If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', you may be experiencing symptoms of insomnia and you may find this workbook helpful.

THIS WORKBOOK AIMS TO HELP YOU TO:

- Recognise whether you may be experiencing symptoms of insomnia.
- Understand what insomnia is, what causes it and what keeps it going.
- Find ways to understand, manage or overcome your insomnia

1. Do I have symptoms of insomnia?

If you experience symptoms of insomnia it is likely that you will recognise many of the feelings, physical symptoms, thoughts and behaviour patterns described below.

Please tick the boxes which regularly apply to you.



Feelings

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Anxiety | ☐ |
| Frustration | ☐ |
| Irritability | ☐ |
| Helplessness | ☐ |
| Sadness or low mood | ☐ |



Physical symptoms

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Increased heart rate | ☐ |
| Muscle tension (especially neck, shoulders, jaw) | ☐ |
| "Butterflies" in the stomach | ☐ |
| Dizziness or lightheadedness | ☐ |
| Shortness of breath | ☐ |
| Restlessness (tossing and turning in bed) | ☐ |



Thinking patterns

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| "What if I can't sleep tonight?" | ☐ |
| "I'll be a mess tomorrow." | ☐ |
| "Why can't I sleep like everyone else?" | ☐ |
| Catastrophic thinking: imagining worst-case scenarios | ☐ |
| Obsessive clock-watching | ☐ |



Behavioural patterns

- Staying in bed awake for hours ☐
 - Constantly checking the time ☐
 - Using phones/screens late at night ☐
 - Napping during the day to "catch up" ☐
 - Avoiding bed altogether (fear of not sleeping) ☐
-

If you have ticked a number of these boxes you may be experiencing symptoms of insomnia.

However don't be alarmed, this is very common and there are things you can do to improve your situation. You will find some useful strategies in this workbook.

2. What is insomnia?

Insomnia isn't just about struggling to fall asleep — it often involves a cycle of emotions, thoughts, physical reactions, and behaviors.

Recognizing this cycle is the first step toward breaking it.

Insomnia is a sleep disorder where a person has trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up too early — even when they have the chance to sleep.

It leads to feeling tired, low on energy, irritable, or unable to concentrate during the day.

It can be short-term (few days or weeks) — often caused by stress or life changes.

It can also become long-term (lasting for months) — linked to habits, mental health issues, or medical conditions.

It affects both the quantity (how much you sleep) and the quality (how refreshing your sleep feels).



3. What keeps going insomnia?

Even after the original cause (like stress or a bad day) is gone, insomnia can continue because of certain patterns that feed it:

1. Worry About Sleep

Constantly thinking, "What if I can't sleep tonight?" or "I must sleep or I'll fail tomorrow" creates anxiety, which keeps your mind active and alert — making it even harder to sleep.

2. Unhelpful Sleep Habits

Staying in bed for hours awake

Sleeping in late the next day to "make up for it"

3. Negative Emotions and Stress

Frustration, anger, sadness, and feeling hopeless at night raise your stress hormones (like cortisol), keeping your body too alert for sleep.

4. Physical Tension

Muscle tightness, racing heartbeat, shallow breathing — all signs your body is stuck in "fight or flight" mode, not "rest and sleep" mode.

4. How can I reduce my insomnia?

Fortunately, there are a number of strategies that we can use to reduce our insomnia. These include:

1. Set a Regular Sleep-Wake Schedule

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.

2. Create a Calm Pre-Sleep routine

30–60 minutes before bed, do calming activities:

3. Manage Worries before bed

Write down your worries in a journal before sleeping.

4. Use Your Bed Only for Sleep

Avoid watching TV, using your phone, or eating in bed.

5. Calm Your Body and Mind

Try relaxation techniques like:

Deep breathing (4-7-8 method)

Progressive muscle relaxation



14-day activity plan to help manage insomnia

Day 1 Schedule Making Day

Fix your wake-up and sleep time — stick to it daily.

Day 2 Relaxation Ritual Day

Create your personalized calming bedtime routine.

Day 3 Digital Detox Day

Switch off all screens 1 hour before bed.

Day 4 Mind Dump Day

Write down all your worries in a notebook before sleep.

Day 5 Bedroom Reset Day

Clean and decorate your room into a peaceful sleep sanctuary.



14-day activity plan to help manage insomnia

Day 6 Deep Breathing Day

Practice the 4-7-8 breathing method before bedtime.

Day 7 No-Nap Challenge Day

Stay awake all day — save all your tiredness for nighttime sleep.

Day 8 Sunshine Boost Day

Spend 20+ minutes outside soaking up natural sunlight.

Day 9 Light Eating Day

Eat a light dinner — no heavy or spicy foods after 7 PM.

Day 10 Gratitude Glow Day

Write 3 things you're grateful for before sleep.



14-day activity plan to help manage insomnia

Day 11 Body Relaxation Day

Do progressive muscle relaxation — melt away tension.

Day 12 Calm Action Day

If awake in bed too long, get up and do something relaxing.

Day 13 Caffeine Cut-Off Day

No caffeine (coffee, tea, chocolate) after 2 PM.

Day 14 Reflection Day

Review your progress — celebrate small wins and plan what habits to continue.



Conclusion

Improving your sleep is a journey, not a race.

By making small, consistent changes every day, you're teaching your mind and body to relax, trust, and welcome restful sleep again.

Remember, it's normal to have ups and downs — what matters most is staying kind to yourself and continuing the healthy habits you've built over these 14 days.

Better nights lead to brighter days. You deserve both.

"Sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together."

— Thomas Dekker 