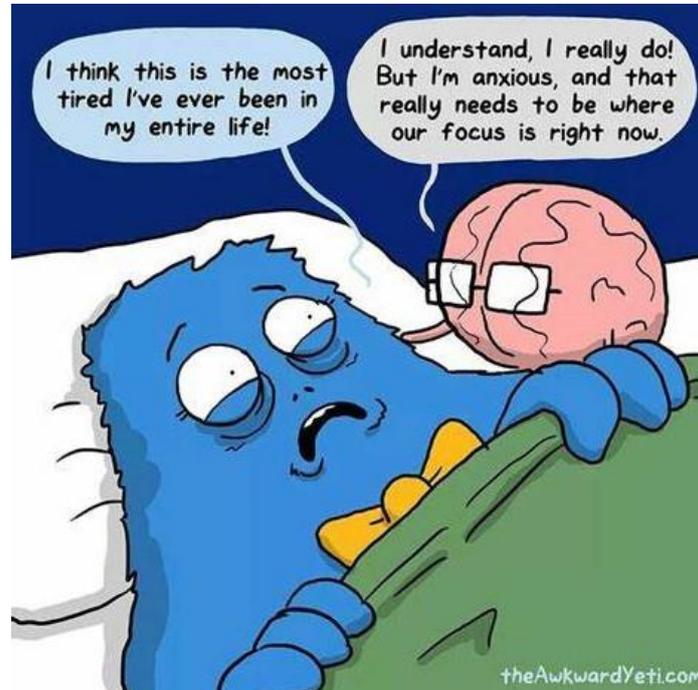


## Sleep



It can be difficult to sleep at the best of times, but during a pandemic with heightened anxieties, good quality sleep can be even harder to come by. When our routines are out sync, it can have a big impact. Below are some tips and techniques which you could try which may aide better sleep during these uncertain times:

Following good sleep hygiene practice can be helpful for any of us to help us sleep better and have better quality sleep.

**Limiting day time naps:** It's very difficult when we have less to do and boredom kicks in. Try not to sleep too much in the day as this can make it harder to fall asleep at night time. If you do have a daytime nap, try to limit this to under an hour.

**Have a good routine:** Go to bed and get up at the roughly the same time each day. Try to do something relaxing before bed – don't watch a scary film or the news which can stimulate you, instead listen to some calming music or try yoga or having a nice bath. Anything that helps calm your body and mind is helpful.

**Try to avoid stimulants before bed:** Caffeine, nicotine and other stimulants can impact on our ability to fall to sleep as they are designed to get us up and going.



**Gentle exercise:** can help promote good quality sleep. A gentle walk in the evening after your evening meal or some calming yoga can use those energy reserves – as little as 10 minutes physical activity can greatly improve the quality of our sleep.

**Exposure to natural daylight:** if you are able to get outside, that can really help. If you are self-isolating and are unable to go out, opening the curtains and windows to get fresh air and natural light into your home can also help.

**Create the right ambience for you:** making sure your bedroom isn't too light, too hot or too noisy is helpful. Try to keep your bedroom for sleep – try not to fall asleep with the TV on – even better, avoid having a TV or using your mobile phone when in bed.

**Set aside some 'worry' time:** bedtime is not the time to think about all your worries – but our brains don't always follow this logic! Setting some time aside in the day to 'worry' or problem solve things that are concerning you can help alleviate the impact. You might also want to have a notebook by your bed, so if a concern does pop up, you can write it down, so it isn't whirring round in your head all night, disturbing your sleep.

### **Useful resources**

Sleep podcast: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos/wellbeing-and-sleep-full-works](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos/wellbeing-and-sleep-full-works)

NHS: [www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep/)

Headspace: [www.headspace.com/meditation/sleep](http://www.headspace.com/meditation/sleep)

## Goal Setting

It can be very difficult during these uncertain times to keep motivated. Setting ourselves small goals or tasks to achieve can be very helpful in providing something to look forward to, a distraction from what is outside of our control and can give us a sense of achievement.

If you have never set goals before, it is helpful to think about what you would like to achieve and then using the steps below to break this down. One helpful model is called SMART goals:

Example:

<b>SPECIFIC</b>	What	<i>Go for a walk</i>
<b>MEASURABLE</b>	When will I do it by?	<i>Before 5pm</i>
<b>ACHIEVABLE / ATTAINABLE</b>	Can I do this?	<i>Yes – I can follow a route around my local area</i>
<b>RELEVANT</b>	Does this help me get to where I want to be?	<i>Yes – I want to maintain my activity levels</i>
<b>TIMELY</b>	How will I know I when I have done it?	<i>I have set myself a time to do it by today</i>



Another helpful model is 'Plan, Do and Review': Example

