

## Developing a new bedtime routine

1. Firstly, consider your bedtime environment; is this a place free from chaos? If not, let the tidying up commence, this will also help when you come to revise. Your bedroom should be free from distractions and clutter. (*No dressing gowns or coats on the back of doors*). Basically, your bedroom should ideally be boring – a bedroom is for sleep. If you have limited space to store all your things, try covering any mess with a sheet or towel.
2. What is the temperature like in your bedroom? Too hot or cold? It's better to keep your temperature at a constant heat; fairly cool is ideal, using a thicker cover for warmth.
3. Decide what time you are going to bed to try and sleep.
4. Also decide what time you would ideally like to wake up.
5. Bear in mind your age. Below is a guide to the average amount of sleep you need per night.

| Age      | Average Hours of sleep needed |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| 11 Years | 9 ½ Hours per night           |
| 12 Years | 9 ½ Hours per night           |
| 13 Years | 9 ¼ Hours per night           |
| 14 Years | 9 Hours per night             |
| 15 Years | 8 ¾ Hours per night           |
| 16 Years | 8 ½ Hours per night           |

6. An hour before your bedtime all electronics should be **SWITCHED OFF**. That includes, TV's, iPods, iPads, mobile phones, Kindles etc...

## 7. Supper time – “Sleepy Foods”

What you eat during the day impacts on your sleep during the night. Avoid sugary snacks and anything containing caffeine; e.g tea, coffee, hot chocolate and coke.

### Sleepy Foods

| Food     | Description  |
|----------|--|
| Almonds  | These contain magnesium, which promotes both sleep, and muscle relaxation. They also help to keep blood sugar levels stable overnight.   |
| Bananas  | These are an excellent source of magnesium and potassium. They also contain tryptophan an amino acid that helps us to sleep, but don't forget that fruit contains sugar too. Blend one banana with one cup of milk or soya milk to make an ideal bedtime drink.                  |
| Dairy    | Yogurt, milk and cheese all contain tryptophan, which help us to nod off more easily. Calcium is also effective in stress reduction. <i>(NO, eating cheese doesn't give you nightmares!!)</i>  |
| Oatmeal  | This is an excellent suppertime choice; it's cheap and easy to prepare and contains lots of sleep inducing properties. It's rich in calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, silicon and potassium; all of which promote better sleep. <i>(for an added hit, try adding some banana)</i> |
| Cherries | Particularly tart cherries have been found to naturally boost melatonin production.  |

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|--------|---|
|        | Drinking a glass of cherry juice (available in health food stores) has been proven to aid sleep. Alternatively, try a serving of fresh, frozen or dried cherries before bedtime.  |
| Cereal | Not only is this a healthy snack, but it may also help you to snooze. Complex, carbohydrate-rich foods increase the availability of tryptophan in the bloodstream. <i>Avoid sugar-coated cereals, as this could give you a sugar rush, which will wake you up!!</i> |

8. Hot bath or shower. Taking a bath or shower later on, will help you to relax. The warmth of the water will relax you so much that you will feel sleepy. *(If you are unable to do this every night, try keeping your night clothes on the radiator.)*
9. Soothing music is an excellent way to relax.
10. Reading a book or magazine is also an excellent way to unwind. Lighting in your bedroom should be low; I would recommend a light that is yellow in colour. Avoid any lights that have a blue colour.

### Time to sleep...

*If at first you don't succeed, then try again. Practice makes perfect. You're teaching your body a new routine, so this may take a little time to kick in.*

*Well done, keep going... YOU CAN DO THIS!!!*