Tip Sheet

* Be mindful of good sleep hygiene (*Nice Guidelines, 2009)*

-Aim to go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning. Having a regular sleep routine improves our sleep drive, increasing the likelihood that we will fall asleep fast and enjoy good quality sleep.

-Make your bedroom your ‘zen’ zone. Remove screens from your bedroom and try to make it as cool, calm and quiet as possible. Have your bedroom as a place for sleep and intimacy only.

-If you like exercise, aim to leave 4 hours between sleep and exercise to give yourself time to wind down.

-Be mindful of consumption of stimulants such as caffeine and alcohol. Aim to leave 6 hours between your last caffeinated drink of the day and sleep. Many people are particularly sensitive to caffeine.

-Limit napping to 25 minutes.

* If you find yourself lying awake in bed, practice mindful breathing to enable your body to enjoy rest and recuperation. Just focusing on your breathing can be enough to slow down your heart rate and trigger relaxation.
* Be aware that social and political perceptions of good sleep vary from country to country. In the UK, good sleep is considered as being an 8 hour block of uninterrupted sleep. In Spain however, bi-phasic sleep which involves a sleep at night and also in the day, is promoted and considered normal and healthy. Choose a way of sleeping that works for you.
* Avoid doing things to go to sleep. Meditating or listening to a relaxing audio is likely to send you to sleep but the aim of such practices are to enjoy deep rest and relaxation.
* Try to allow enough time and space for good sleep. There is often a big focus on diet and exercise in our culture. Sleep is also a vital pillar for wellbeing.
* Evidence suggests that good quality bedding and a comfortable mattress have a positive impact on our quality of sleep. We spend up to 10 hours per day in our beds. It is an area of our lives worth investing in.
* If you feel tired or lethargic during the day, take time out to close your eyes and rest. Even 5 minutes of shut eye and relaxation can be enough to boost energy levels and help us feel refreshed.
* If you are lying in bed awake in the middle of the night, try not to worry, you are certainly not alone. It is not abnormal to wake up during the night (Foster, 2012).
* Remember that sleep will always come to you. It is not possible to be sleep deprived for long without falling into phases of micro-sleep (your body sending you to sleep for a few seconds without you actually realizing it).
* If you are going through a phase of insomnia and have the option of taking public transport instead of driving, opt for the former.
* Meditate daily for at least 15 minutes. This will help decrease overall arousal and will help you to deal with stress, in turn increasing your likelihood of sleeping well.
* Exercise and fitness is also shown to have an impact on how quickly we are likely to fall asleep as well as the quality of our sleep. (Passos et al, 2012). If you can improve your fitness, it is likely that you will improve your quality of sleep.
* If you would like an audio to listen to in bed at night for deep rest and relaxation, SleepWales recommend Yoga Nidra by Manuji (available on Itune). ‘Yoga Nidra’ means ‘Sleep Meditation’, Indian yogi’s claim that 1 hour of Yoga Nidra is equal to 4 hours sleep.

*Foster, R. (2012) URL* [*http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16964783*](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16964783)

*Passos, G., Poyares, D., Santana, M., Tufik, S., Tulio de Mello, M. (2012)* Is exercise an alternative treatment for chronic insomnia? *Clinics,* 67 (6). 653-659.