



Struggling to Sleep? Waking up feeling groggy?

Try these tips to help you rest better...

1 Make a routine

Our bodies work best when they know what to expect. It is better to go to bed and to get up at the same time every day. Long lie-ins and late nights at the weekend disrupt our body's rhythms and make it harder to get up earlier in the week.

2 Keep your bedroom calm and quiet

In the 1890s the Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov's work with dogs taught us that the brain can learn to associate certain prompts with certain activities. You can harness this to your advantage, by making sure your bed is somewhere you associate with sleep, rather than with mental stimulation. TV watching, internet surfing and working should be carried out elsewhere so that when you get into bed your brain knows you are ready to sleep.

3 Avoid screens in the bedroom.

The blue light from TVs, phones, tablets and the like mimics daylight and disrupts our biorhythms.

4 Avoid Caffeine late in the day. People are affected differently by caffeine – some can drink it much closer to bed time than others. But studies show that drinking caffeinated drinks after 6pm – and for some people as early as 3pm – can affect our ability to sleep.

5 Avoid large meals and soft or alcoholic drinks close to bedtime. That little tot of brandy before bed will help you go to sleep, it's true, but it will wake you up much earlier than you would normally and your sleep in the later parts of the night will be less good quality. Even a soft drink makes you more likely to have to get up in the night to go to the bathroom. And large meals require lots of work by your digestive system, when your brain is trying to wind everything down.

6 Avoid long or late naps.

Napping for 20 minutes or so can invigorate us, especially when done after lunch. But later in the day or napping for over 30 minutes this can affect your ability to get off to sleep at the proper time.

If after trying all these tips you are still waking up feeling groggy and unrested, it may be worth finding out if you are a sleep apnoea sufferer. Sleep apnoea is a condition in which you stop breathing for a period of time when you fall deeply asleep. Your brain recognises a drop in your oxygen levels and wakes you up with a gasp to restore you to safe levels. This means that you do not get long periods of deep sleep, and can raise your risk of various serious health problems.

Health care professionals use a specially designed questionnaire amongst other things to assess of sleep apnoea. This is called the Epworth Sleepiness Scale. Have a look and see what you would answer to the questions below.

How likely are you to doze off or fall asleep in the following situations, in contrast to feeling just tired? This refers to your usual way of life in recent times. Even if you have not done some of these things recently, try to work out how they would have affected you. Use the following scale to choose the most appropriate number for each situation.

Score (0-3)

0 – would never doze

1 – slight chance of dozing

2 – moderate chance of dozing

3 – high chance of dozing

Situation

- Sitting and reading
- Watching TV
- Sitting, inactive in a public place (e.g. a theatre or a meeting)
- As a passenger in a car for an hour without a break
- Lying down to rest in the afternoon when circumstances permit
- Sitting and talking to someone
- Sitting quietly after lunch without alcohol
- In a car, while stopped for a few minutes in traffic

Once you have answered all the questions, add up your score.

0 to 10 Normal score

11 – 14 Mild chance of sleep apnoea

15 – 18 Moderate chance of sleep apnoea

19 – 24 High chance of sleep apnoea

Whether or not you think you may have sleep apnoea, if you or your partner's sleep is disturbed by snoring, book an appointment to find out how we may be able to help.

Get in touch with us

Book for a free no-obligation consultation to find our more. Just call us on **0121 382 8544** or email smile@nothingbutthetooth.co.uk