

Wellbeing Essentials

Sleep



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STRENGTH THROUGH UNDERSTANDING

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Sleep



Good sleep patterns are SO important for our health and yet, they are often the first thing to be disturbed when we are feeling low, angry, stressed, worried, excited and any number of other emotions.

There are a number of things we can do to help:

1. Screen Time

Reducing the amount of time we spend on screens (TV, computers, phone) helps us to be more relaxed. This is particularly important in the evening before we go to bed.

Screens (and energy efficient bulbs) emit light on the blue wavelength. This type of light has been scientifically proven to disrupt our brain's ability to produce melatonin. Melatonin is the body's natural sleep chemical.

The body operates on something called the circadian rhythm – this is our biological clock. The circadian rhythm is affected by light.

Before we had artificial lighting, our body clock responded to the natural light around us – keeping us awake and alert during daylight and preparing us for sleep (by producing melatonin) in the evening when it was darker.

Now, though, we are surrounded by bright lights most of the time. In the evening, light of any kind disrupts our body clock but, light on the blue wavelengths is by far the worst.

NB. Blue light isn't always bad. During the day it boosts attention, reaction time and mood.

Science suggests that we need to stop looking at blue light up to three hours before bedtime to maintain our natural circadian rhythm. In the modern world, this is probably a little unrealistic.

I recommend moderation.

In my family, my kids have to switch off computers etc. an hour before bedtime. They use this time to shower, read (or other non-screen related activities) and meditate.



2. Meditate before bedtime

One study that compared a group of people who meditated and another group who didn't showed that the meditators fell asleep faster and stayed asleep for longer.

Being skilled in meditation helps you to control your thoughts and avoid the 'mind-racing' that is often linked to insomnia.

3. Keep a Positivity Journal

As we saw in a previous issue, a positivity journal is a simple concept that helps you to focus on the good things in life.

All you have to do, at the end of each day, is to reflect back on your day and write down the three most positive things that happened.

Maybe you made someone smile, maybe someone made you smile. Was the sun shining, did work go particularly well, did you have a nice lunch, did you achieve something that made you feel happy or proud?

It can be anything at all.

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The important thing is that you do it every day and that you write it down. Because of the way our memory works, just thinking about it isn't good enough because we will have forgotten most of it by the next day.

Typing it into your phone or tablet won't work because these are screens and we need to avoid screens at night.

Buy yourself a beautiful little notebook or journal and simply write down your positives last thing each night before you go to sleep. It will make you feel good and it will also ensure that your sub-conscious brain is thinking about nice things whilst you are sleeping.

Importantly though, as your positivity journal grows it becomes a fantastic support tool. Any time you are feeling down you can simply look back at all of the positives in your life and it helps to keep everything in perspective.

It's a win-win!

At Resilient Me, we have created our own Positivity Journal. You can find it on our website www.resilientme.co.uk/shop or on the Etsy website www.etsy.com.

4. Top Tips for a Good Night's Sleep

- Keep your room well ventilated
- Buy the best quality mattress that you can afford
- Keep lighting and screen time before bed to a minimum. Do not use a night light!
- Avoid drinking caffeine, sugar and alcohol
- Keep a positivity journal
- Keep a notebook by your bed. If you wake in the night, write down your thoughts. This will allow you to relax and go back to sleep

Rachel Munns Founder & Principal



Resilient Me specialise in Mental Health Awareness, Resilience and Wellbeing training. We also offer confidence building, motivational and personal leadership workshops. We all have close, 'lived' experience of mental health issues, and this combined with our individual expertise has enabled us to produce training and coaching that genuinely makes a difference. **If you want to know more – just call us on 07967 276194 or email info@resilientme.co.uk**

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