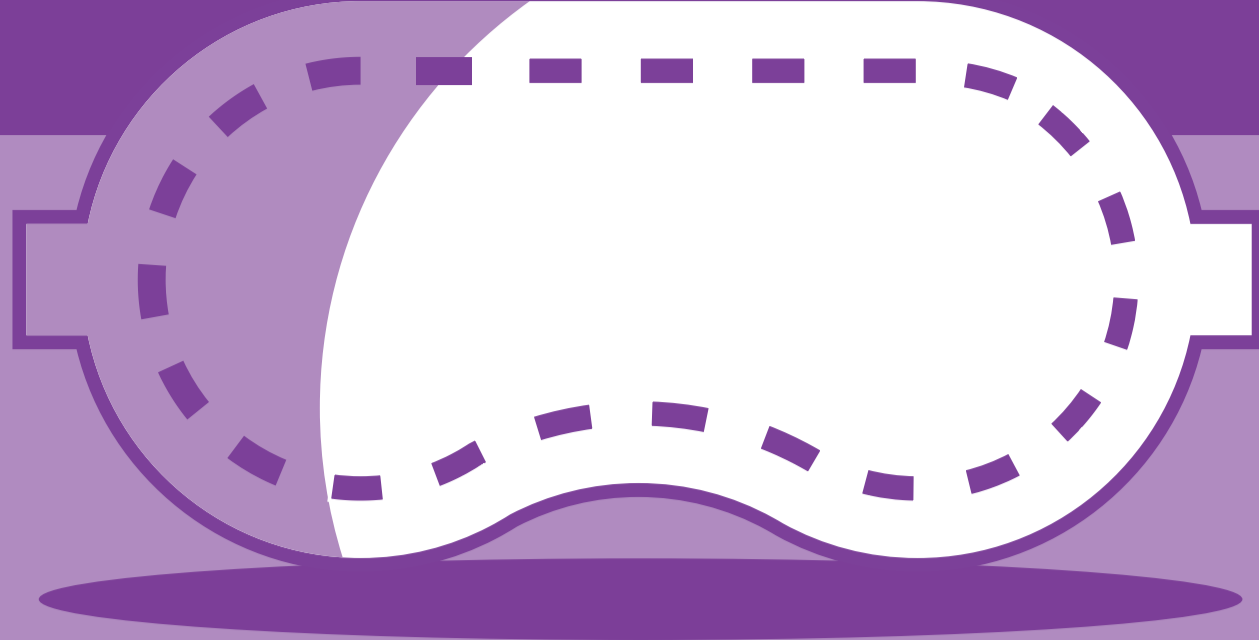


A mindful bedtime

Get a better night's sleep to ease stress and anxiety



#LetsTalk

Sleep plays an essential role in a person's mental and physical health and wellness. A lack of quality sleep can cause stress, irritability and even anxiety. But, sleep doesn't come easily to all of us ... and it's nearly impossible to force sleep. In all probability, the more someone tries to sleep, the less likely it is to happen.

For those struggling to get the rest they need, a mindfulness meditation at bedtime may be just what's needed.

A guided approach to mindful sleeping

Because we can't force sleep upon ourselves, the goal of mindful meditation at bedtime should simply be to stay relaxed and less absorbed in our thoughts. The following ten steps are designed to help you get a better night's sleep.

1 Lie down with legs hip-width apart and arms by your side or on your stomach.

2

Notice your breath, paying attention to the physical movement related to breathing and the air moving in and out of your nose and mouth.

3

Recognise thoughts about the day or worrying about tomorrow as habits and let them go, remembering to keep coming back to noticing your breath.

4

Shift attention to sensations in your body. Start by noticing your feet — the temperature or the pressure of your heel against the blanket or the mat beneath you.

5

Move your attention into your lower legs, noticing whatever there is to notice and letting go of a sense of effort or needing to make anything happen.

6

Aim to relax and let go of any tension you feel through your knees and into your upper legs.

7

Notice other physical sensations as you bring awareness to your buttocks and pelvis and into your stomach and abdomen and chest. Is there tension or tightness? Note each time your mind gets caught up in thoughts of discomfort or distraction and gently guide your mind back.

8

Without moving, bring your attention to your back, relaxing your muscles and lowering your shoulders if necessary.

9

Bring awareness to your neck and the muscles of your face noticing any tightness or pinching, and then with gentleness, relax those muscles.

10

If you're still awake, bring your attention back to the breath, each time the mind wanders into the past or into the future.

Help for healthier living

Whether you're an individual looking to improve your health and wellness with self-care resources, or an organisation taking steps to help build a more resilient workforce, there are programs and resources that can help.

This information is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

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For more information check out [Mental health support resources](#) and [Aetna International's stress-reduction services](#)

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#MentalHealth

#MentalHealthAwareness

#EndTheStigma

Sources:

<https://www.mindful.org/a-mindfulness-practice-for-better-sleep/>

<http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/need-sleep/whats-in-it-for-you/mood>