

# 'Operation Snooze'

*Execute the 'Three ZZZ's Snooze' strategy and achieve real 'Sleep Zzzen'*

# OPERATION SNOOZE

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Stress(ed) Guru

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# How to execute 'Operation Snooze'

Do you struggle to get off to sleep? Do you find your mind just won't settle and let you relax? Do you find yourself waking in the early hours and then struggling to get back off to sleep?

Then this book is here to help. It aims to support you in developing better sleep routines, habits and skills.

Read straight through from start to finish by all means. You will learn the importance of sleep and why the advice here can help.

If you just want to get stuck into the advice, then head for the 'Three Zzzed's Snooze Strategy' section and dive in.

You could start by selecting one of the *three Z's* improving one area before moving onto the next -

'Sleep Zzzoning' - preparing your sleep environment;

'Prepare to knock out the Zzzeds,' - preparing yourself for sleep;

'Sleep Zzzen' - getting better at the art of sleeping;

Or you could just dip in, pick the tips that you feel comfortable with, and try them tonight.

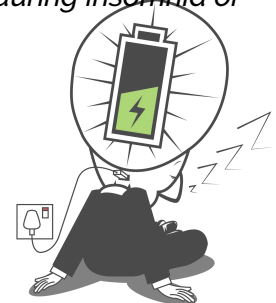
The aim is to implement something consistently - that's where you will see improvement.

Over time you will find you will improve your sleep and develop better and more restful sleep habits.

The information here is designed for you to refer back to whenever you find yourself struggling to have a proper rest, and you can dip in and out to find other tips to introduce into your nightly routine.

Don't forget the other resources at my website [www.stressedguru.com](http://www.stressedguru.com) - (infographics, e-books, videos and audio relaxations) are all designed to compliment your wellbeing improvement efforts and many will support your sleep improvement work.

*If you have or discover you have significant problems with your sleep do seek professional medical support. Nothing in this e-book is intended to replace the professional support some may need if enduring insomnia or other sleep conditions.*



# TATT or FFATT?

It's 9pm and I'm knackered (technical term for 'exhausted'). I've made it to bedtime, having dragged myself in a drowsy stupor through the day. I feel drained and I feel on edge. I have snapped at my children more than once today and for pretty trivial things. Who the hell am I anymore? I just feel 'tired all the time.'

I've even been to see my doctor to explain that I just have no energy, I can't relax and I feel exhausted after a so called 'good night's sleep'. The doctor was very supportive and offered me some great advice. But, as I observed her summarise everything I said with the letters 'TATT,' I found myself discovering just how common my complaint was. You see, it had achieved the status in the medical profession of having it's own set of letters! 'TATT,' she explained, meant 'Tired All The Time.'

It hit me then, that whilst I wasn't alone, nor a freak, I was nevertheless part of a growing number of people who stumbled through life in a haze of tiredness accepting it as 'just the way it is.'

'TATT' covered a multitude of causes as well as symptoms - stress, anxiety, exhaustion, inability to relax or switch off and poor sleep quality, to name a few. So I took on a mission. I embarked on 'Operation Snooze,' in a bid to really discover how to turn 'TATT' into 'FFATT' - 'feeling fantastic all the time!'

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I found there is not one simple answer. However, at the heart of it, is getting a good night's sleep: 'Knocking out some quality Zzzeds,' 'Having a good kip,' or 'sleeping for England (or whatever country you would represent!).' However you describe it, that seemingly elusive ability to actually relax and sleep restfully without disruption, is a key ingredient. The good news is for most of us it really is possible to achieve. And...

You will redefine what 'normal' actually feels like. With consistent application of the tips in this e-book (supported by some good general well-being improvement and positive stress management), you will learn a brilliant secret. Here it is...

You know on those rare occasions when you've had an awesome night's sleep? Yes I know it may have been a while ago, but cast your mind back and think about how you felt. You felt fantastic! You felt full of beans and you could take on the world, couldn't you?

Here's the thing. That's not fantastic. That's normal. That's what normal feels like if you consistently sleep well. You (as I did for so long) fell into the trap of defining it as something special or fantastic and your 'normal' became that sense of TATT instead of FFATT.

Well, no more. From now, tell yourself you will not accept that as your 'normal' Let's get to work and turn your TATT to FFATT!

SLEEP...

WHY BOTHER?



# SLEEP...WHY BOTHER?

The Sleep Council rather poetically describes sleep as:

*"the mysterious shift in consciousness that our bodies need each day."*<sup>1</sup>

A good night's sleep goes through six ninety-minute cycles of varying levels, where you're either deeply asleep or lightly resting.

The body will come under pressure to sleep after about 15 hours, as our natural body clock (the circadian rhythm) ideally enables us to get up early and feel tired at night. It is a "24-hour cycle that regulates all our biological and physiological processes. It anticipates environmental changes around us so that our bodies can adapt to them."<sup>1</sup>

As you read on, you'll see why it's so necessary for us to pay attention to this natural rhythm and what it can mean long-term if you don't.

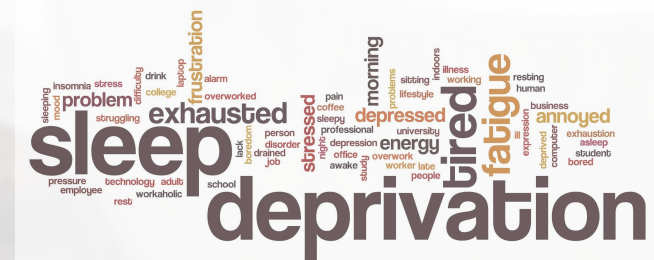
But why bother? Can't we just override this natural process with sheer determination, artificial light and a regular, if not intravenous, supply of caffeine?

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Well, not being one to simply take a bunch of experts at their word, I decided to see for myself.

Enter, my very own sleep deprivation experiment - sample size one (me!).

I decided to try to go without sleep for 40 hours. Something I had not done before - and I DO NOT recommend - especially without medical support. I was stupid doing this. We join my experiment journal entries at 20hrs without sleep...



# SLEEP DEPRIVATION...THE EXPERIMENT

**3am.** Now 20 hrs into the experiment and for some strange reason, I am finding that I am rattling through a load of 'to do's' that have been lying around for some time. Have devised a couple more information leaflets for my website, sorted all my emails out – deleting unwanted and filing (yes filing) others. Starting to feel a real buzz about this now. Wonder if I could do this more often.

What's the harm really?? Especially if I am this productive every time!

**5am – 22hrs in.** I don't feel tired. Yes I have a strange thick feeling in my head but, otherwise am still working away. I seem to have naturally moved from more challenging tasks such as writing reports, books, articles etc to more sedate but strangely engaging tasks such as changing the layout of a leaflet, choosing some artwork for the leaflets and proof reading. That last one is weird. Surely I need to be alert to have an eye for detail? Maybe so, since I haven't found a mistake yet... unless of course that's cos I'm perfect!

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**7am – 24hrs in.** Can hear the street outside coming to life. This is weird. I suppose I have experienced this before thanks to my police career but normally at this time, having completed a full night shift I would be climbing under the duvet chuckling to myself at the thought that whilst the rest of the world is getting up, I am going to bed to sleep..

**8am – Feel sick.** I'm gonna throw up. Should eat something but can't face it. Just want my bed. Who would know? I could just take a nap. Just a little one. No-one would know.

Got to get on with something to keep myself occupied. I check my emails – again. The 'B-Daily' news email arrives. I read it for the first time in months. I even take part in the survey! Roll on 10pm tonight.





# THE EXPERIMENT... *continues*

**12 midday (29hrs in) – somehow I've made it through** to lunchtime without throwing up. My eyes feel like dried prunes and I really must remember to check everything that I have typed this morning. Found a 'fart' in one of my emails. I think I had meant to type – 'start' so God knows how that happened.

**4pm – This is ridiculous.** Who's stupid idea was this anyway? Wait till I see them. I'm going to tear them a new.... where was I? Who am I? Oh God, I feel like pooh.

**8pm - somehow have managed** to get through watching the One Show without falling asleep. That's a feat in itself but I'm especially proud of it today. Bed, bed, bed, bed.

**11pm (40hrs done!)- bed – Oh My God,** am I glad to see you. Not even going to get undressed or do my teeth! Sleep

This was several years ago now. I had started to get interested in the science of sleep following my frustration at not being able to get enough of it. I carried out this test to see what would happen to me and, more importantly, to learn just how important it was to my sense of well-being.

I chose a quiet time in my work and also when I knew I wouldn't be doing anything dangerous.

I made sure I had done any major tasks, and readied myself to stay awake for a full 40 hours. As I went into the test stage, I kept in mind the one golden rule of stress and sleep:

The more stress (physical and/or psychological) you are under, the more rest and sleep you will require to restore the healthy balance.



# SLEEP DEPRIVATION...MY OWN CONCLUSIONS

I kicked off my experiment with a normal day and simply stayed up rather than going to bed.

In the first few hours, I found myself being very productive, and completing outstanding tasks I'd been putting off.

As the time went on, however, I found that I felt sick and unwell. Although I was working, I was concerned that I was making mistakes.

There is some interesting research into sleep deprivation and a lot of it seems to conclude that whilst sleep plays an important part in rejuvenation of the body and organs, what seems to be more important is the detriment to mind and body if deprived of sleep.

Furthermore, it appears critical to the rest and regeneration of the brain and in particular the prefrontal cortex, which is constantly on the go and responsible in large part for verbal fluency and non-verbal planning.<sup>2</sup>

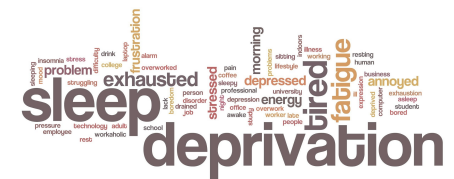
More significantly, depriving myself of sleep for 40 hours had long-term effects that I hadn't foreseen, including a bout of cold. I've found from my own research that clocking up sleep hours is a bit like balancing a bank account.

If you overdraw (i.e. go with less sleep than you need), you do need to pay it back at some stage, otherwise you will suffer.

It's not as easy as you think to build the hours back up, so it's vital that you get enough sleep every night to maintain optimum health and mental alertness.

Depriving yourself of sleep doesn't benefit you in the long run.

**I DO NOT recommend you try this yourself, so please take my word for it.**



# SLEEP DEPRIVATION...MY OWN CONCLUSIONS

If you're aware that you're not getting as much sleep as you need or the quality isn't what it should be, you'll find all sorts of tips and techniques over the following pages which you should find helpful for making improvements.

Remember, if you're having ongoing problems, talk to your GP to make sure there isn't an underlying cause for your sleep issues.





# WHY IS SLEEP IMPORTANT?

# IT'S ALL IN THE 90 MINUTES...

But hey, don't just take my word for it.

Many scientists have devoted their careers to help us have a greater understanding of sleep, the health benefits and risks of not sleeping well.

Richard Wiseman, a Professor of the Public Understanding of Psychology at the University of Hertfordshire, has written extensively on the subject. He first became interested in the science of sleep after a period of night terrors.

He felt that, while a lot is known about sleep, this isn't communicated well enough to the general public.<sup>3</sup>

He spoke to a number of experts, conducted mass sleeping experiments and studied a huge archive of dreams.

His conclusion was that the circadian rhythm is more important than we realise, and the ninety-minute cycles need to be adhered to.

Interestingly, he found that depressed people dream more:

***"Depressed people dream about five times as much as non-depressed people as they try to work through their problems. Because they are spending more time in REM and not as much time in deep sleep, their bodies aren't repairing themselves and they wake up shattered."***

It's certainly worth being aware of this when you're feeling stressed and anxious.

He also discovered that a good way to go to sleep is to try to stay awake. Not as counter-intuitive as it sounds, but simply trying to tire the brain with techniques such as imagining positive situations or trying to think of an animal for every letter of the alphabet. Insomniacs are often told to try to keep their eyes open as a way to help them drift off. Wiseman has published a book, *'Nightschool'* which is a great read if you want to dig deeper into his work and findings.<sup>4</sup>

# SLEEP IS FOR WIMPS?

As the pool of research widens, there is growing evidence that we undervalue the need for sleep and most of us are getting far less than we need.

There are a number of factors contributing to this, including a 24-hour lifestyle, information overload, changes in family dynamics, the way we work and the pressures we're under (whether internal or external).

Even Arianna Huffington, founder and former editor in chief of online news outlet Huffington Post, has said that we are *"in the midst of a sleep deprivation crisis"*, which needs a revolution to end it<sup>5</sup>.

A successful businesswoman with an international career, many years of travel and long hours in the office finally caught up with her. Frequently working 18-hour days, one day she passed out at home and woke in a pool of blood, with a broken cheekbone and a cut eyebrow. The cause?

Exhaustion.

She believes that sleep is not just vital for our health, but also critical to helping us achieve our goals, and that the cultural dismissal of sleep as time wasted compromises our health and our decision-making and undermines our work, personal lives and sex lives.<sup>4</sup>

There are also plenty of medical reasons to get more sleep: it's involved in healing and repair of your heart and blood vessels, and sleep deficiency is linked to an increased risk of heart and kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and stroke.

Astonishingly, it can even cause premature ageing.

The NHS' own website says that regular bouts of poor sleep can not only increase the risk of serious health conditions such as heart disease, obesity and diabetes, but can also shorten life expectancy.<sup>6</sup>

# SO, HOW MUCH DO WE NEED?

How much sleep you need is very much down to your individual genetic make-up, but in general humans have evolved to operate best with 16 hours of activity and eight hours of sleep.

While we all know someone who can manage (and function well) on five or six hours, it's not advisable to make this a habit.

Pay attention to what your body's telling you and you'll know how much sleep you need.<sup>7</sup>

An American study in 2004, one of the first of its kind, looked at how being tired can impact on a person's ability to make decisions and take risks. Unsurprisingly, there was a correlation.<sup>7</sup>

The doctors had two test groups, sleepy and alert, and paid them to complete tasks on the computer. Every so often, they had the choice to stop and take their money, or keep going to earn more, with the risk of losing their money if they failed to complete the work. The sleepy participants took far more risks than the alert group.

There are also positives to getting enough sleep; some you may not be aware of:

Sleep improves your memory, and if you're trying to learn a new skill, you consolidate it overnight. Furthermore, your brain also reorganises and restructures these skills, which can lead to greater creativity.<sup>9</sup>

To improve your performance, whether at work or in sport, research has found that sleeping up to 10 hours for a period of 6 to 8 weeks reduces daytime fatigue and more stamina.

## **NEED MORE CONVINCING? - WEIGHT LOSS BENEFIT!**

Finally, if you're looking to lose weight, dieters who are well rested generally lose more weight, and feel less hungry when they've had plenty of sleep. All good reasons to hit the sack earlier!

Right then, hopefully you are convinced. Now let's get moving with *'Operation Snooze'*...



**OPERATION  
SNOOZE  
IS A 'GO'!**



# OPERATION SNOOZE

## Why 'Operation Snooze'?

Simple really. Improving your sleep is going to be a long running campaign. You need to get focused on the mission:

*'Sleep long, Sleep easy'*

This may take days, weeks or even months, but it will be worth it (remember we aim to move from TATT to FFATT - *tired all the time, to feeling fantastic all the time*).

You will face set-backs and have to overcome numerous obstacles, but you've got this. And you are not expected to jump without a parachute!

You have the "Three Zzzed's Snooze" strategy to help you successfully accomplish your mission...



# The Three Zzzed's



*Zzzone*

*ZzzEd'*

*S*

# THE THREE ZzzED'S

We've seen why sleep is important for our minds and bodies, and the effects of not getting enough sleep, both in the immediate and in the longer term.

However, it's not as simple as hopping into bed tonight and hoping for the best.

I've compiled a list of handy hints which will increase your success at getting a good rest and feeling better in the morning.

I recommend a three-pronged approach, because you want to feel equipped to deal with any obstacles.

The following strategy has a lot of different ideas, which can seem overwhelming, but if you pick a tactic or two from each one and implement them, they will make a difference.

So here's an overview of the 'Three Zzzed's' strategy to help you execute 'Operation Snooze' and achieve your ultimate mission -

**'Sleep Long, Sleep Easy'**

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We need to tackle our sleep troubles on three key fronts; your sleep environment, how you prepare for sleep, and how you develop your sleep skills and habits over the longer term.

So here's how I classify these areas:

**ZzzONE:** focusing on everything we need to do to ensure *where* we sleep (our sleep **zzzone**) is conducive to quality sleep as it can be

**Zzzed's:** focusing on how we settle ourselves and prepare for really knocking out some quality zzz-ed's. In other words, looking at our routines leading up to settling into bed.

**ZzzEN:** focusing on developing longer term great sleep habits. Becoming a **zzzen-master** in the art of sleep, rest and relaxation.



# GETTING INTO THE SLEEP ZZZONE

# GETTING INTO THE SLEEP ZzzONE

## Preparing Your Sleep Environment for Sleep Success

Your bedroom (or sleep) environment is a critical factor in setting you up for sleep success. Many of us spend time planning, organising and decorating our 'sleep haven' when we first move into a new place.

The trouble is, we can get so busy with life and work that we find ourselves falling into bed and bad routines at bedtime and allow clutter, gadgets and piles of clothes to build up and rob the environment of that initial sense of tranquility.

Look around to see what distractions there are there.

Do you have a TV or other electronic equipment which have bright displays? Light pollution can really have an impact on your sleep.

Is your bedroom cluttered, with piles of clothes and papers everywhere, or is it relaxing and soothing?

Do you use it for work or other things?

It needs to be *just* for sleep, so don't use it for anything else.

Your body needs visual cues to reassure it that this is a relaxing sleep environment.

Try one or more of the following to help you better organise and optimise your house and your bedroom.

*Keep the bedroom for sleeping...*

zZZz



## KEEP IT TIDY

Obvious I know, but it can be so easy to let your sleep environment become a disaster zone.

De-clutter and find storage solutions for the stuff you need to keep in your bedroom.

Ideally, we don't want to be reminded of the pressures of daily life in our sleeping quarters, so keep the clutter to a minimum and well out of sight. Tip:

***A place for everything and everything - out of sight.***

Invest in some boxes and baskets. Even if you don't have time (or let's be honest, the inclination) to organise or tidy things away - have separate boxes or baskets for clothes (clean, to be ironed, and for laundry), books, gadgets, etc and hide them out of site in a cupboard. You may not feel like tidying up, but at least you can 'dump them in the relevant box' and hide it for now.

# GADGET FREE

If you have ever watched the original *Poltergeist* movie, you may already be a little afraid of having a TV in the bedroom (*watch it if you haven't seen it!*).

But, that aside, there's an even more convincing reason for creating a gadget free zone in your bedroom.

All these screens - televisions, tablets and telephones - are packed full of stimulation, seduction and distraction.

It is all too easy to *'just watch five minutes'* of TV, or check that Facebook feed for *'five'* and find you have just spent an hour not just staying awake but actively working against your sleep mechanism. Tip:

*Replace rather than remove*

It's actually quite challenging to break some of these habits. So rather than striving to simply eliminate them, identify some low light, low stimulation activity (reading, listening to music) and enjoy that instead. Set a time limit to it to ensure you don't simply replace one anti-sleep activity with another.





## EMBRACE THE DARK SIDE

For a healthy sleep/wake cycle, the body needs to experience definite changes in light. That's why it's great to get outdoors for a bit every day.

If your bedroom is lit at night by outdoor streetlights and LEDs, consider installing a blackout blind or curtain, or investing in an eye-mask so you can't be disturbed by too much light. Tip:

### ***Go back to a good ol' fashioned clock***

One reason we struggle to eliminate gadgets from the bedroom (and thus light pollution), is that many of us now use our (*not so*) smartphones as a clock.

Go retro and invest in an old style analogue clock or low light old LCD style clocks. And turn the face away from you when sleeping. That constant light stimulation may just be enough to be disturbing your slumber.

Experiment with an eye mask - they can feel strange but with perseverance, they can pay dividends.



# RUN QUIET

Noise can be a real disturbance. Let's face it, to our ancestors, noise probably signalled potential threat. So it's no wonder we can be easily roused by non-routine noise.

If you've got pets that have a tendency to wander in during the middle of the night to yowl at you, get in with you or demand your attention, it might be time to start closing the door. I know they won't like it, but trust me, they do learn eventually!

Make sure they've got somewhere comfy and warm to sleep in another part of the house. Fingers crossed they'll sleep there instead! Tip:

## *Try plugs*

This can feel a little disconcerting at first, but investing in reasonable quality ear plugs can be a sleep saver. It can take a little time to get comfortable with the notion that you don't hear as much (and therefore may feel a little out of control), but, again with perseverance, can pay sleep dividends.



A photograph of a snowy mountain landscape. In the foreground, a dark-colored tent is partially visible, with its fabric and ropes. The background shows a vast, snow-covered mountain range under a clear sky. The overall scene is bright and wintry.

## STAY COOL

Sleep happens when the body's core temperature drops by a degree or two, so keep your bedroom cool and well aired, rather than letting it get too hot and stuffy.

Avoid getting too cold, though, as this can keep you awake as well. Tip:

### *Warm bath before bed*

This might sound counter to the 'stay cool' advice, but having a warm bath shortly before retiring can activate the physiological cooling process. A warm bath heats you up and relaxes you. Once out of the bath, your body will start to restore normal body temperature - activating your cooling mechanism. Staying cool is believed to be important, but it is also believed that the 'cooling down' mechanism is conducive to sleep too. Give it a go...

## HOW OLD??

Over time, mattresses, covers and pillows degrade.

Make sure your sleeping equipment is in good condition, offering you the right support for your back and neck to avoid any unnecessary pressures on your body.

*This can be a pricey option, so don't stress the budget if it's going to add stress. There are plenty of other things you can do to assist. Try a mattress topper as a cost-effective 'make do' option. Tip:*

*Rotate...*

If budget is an issue, then try flipping (horizontally one time, vertically the next) the mattress. This gives us the chance to even out the wear and tear. Vacuum the mattress regularly too. Stand it up and beat it (great stress management in itself ;0) - you will be amazed how much 'dust' (let's not get any more descriptive than that here).

*Next section - Preparing for ZzzEd's  
Having looked at some simple tips to improve our sleep Zzzzone, we next need to look at how we prepare ourselves for sleep...*



PREPARING  
FOR

*ZzzED*

# PREPARING FOR *ZzzED*

## Preparing Yourself for Sleep Success

Now that your *zzzedroom* is a comfortable and welcoming haven for relaxation and sleep, you need to make sure that *you* are ready for a good night's rest.

It is important to recognise that, as our pace of life and work has increased, so too has our expectation of our own ability to quickly unwind and relax.

The reality is that we are still a 'cave-person' that happens to live in a modern world.

Our body and mind, especially when it comes to slowing down and relaxing, struggles to do so instantly.

Just as a huge oil tanker has to plan ahead ahead when it is coming into port and start slowing down miles out to sea, we too, need to plan ahead and look at our pre-ZzzED routines.

It may not seem compatible with our current way of living, but re-learning some positive routines '*pre-ZzzED*' will be so worth it when it comes to knocking out some quality 'ZzzEd's' and getting a great night's sleep.

The following tips will help you to send the right triggers to make that happen.

*Sleeping is more than just a Bedroom activity...*

*zzzz*

# WALK TOWARDS THE LIGHT

Natural light keeps our internal clocks on a healthy sleep-wake cycle, so be sure to open the curtains in the morning and try to get outside into the sunlight (it's behind those clouds somewhere!) for a break and a change of scene every day.

It needn't be a bright sunny day to get the benefits of natural daylight. Even a dull cloudy day can provide an amazing dose of natural light. Tip:

*Immediately upon waking.*

There is growing interest in how **cortisol** (one of the key stress chemicals) is managed naturally by the body. One especially interesting area is the impact of a good dose of natural light immediately (*or as soon as you can*) upon waking. Not only great for sleep management, but it seems to positively boost cortisol levels early in the day, leading to a natural decline in levels over the course of the day - which is a good thing and conducive to a slow unwinding into sleep later.

# EXERCISE EARLY AND DAILY

We all know we're supposed to exercise, and it can have a real positive impact on our sleep patterns; it helps to naturally exhaust the body. It stimulates the production of happy hormones which can reduce any stress in the mind.

However, exercising close to bedtime can be too stimulatory, so try to finish your exercise activities a couple of hours before you want to sleep. Tip:

## ***Combine light and movement.***

There can probably be no better combination for waking you up naturally and easily than getting straight outside and going for a walk. We sometimes perceive exercise as meaning '*hard and painful.*' Don't get me wrong, raising our heart rate is important in improving health, but so is simply getting moving. Walking is one of the most natural movements we can engage in. Combine that with an early morning dose of natural daylight and you have a winning combination - gearing you up for the day and helping to set you up for a natural build up of 'sleep pressure' throughout the day, ready for settling into 'Zed' in the evening.



A top-down view of a person with long dark hair napping in a white blanket. A hand is visible holding a silver alarm clock showing approximately 1:50. Next to it is a white mug of coffee. The background is a dark, textured surface.

# POWER NAPPING

A short siesta in the afternoon can really boost performance. The trick is to keep your nap short and sweet – the optimal length and time is for about 20 minutes, usually after lunch when the body wants to hit a restive digesting state. Sleep too long and you'll get into deep sleep and wake up feeling worse than you did before!

*NOTE: If you are struggling with sleep during the night, avoid power naps for now. It's important to be aware of "sleep pressure" – the growing pressure upon us to go to sleep which builds through the day. While a nap can be powerful, it can also reset our 'sleep pressure' dial to zero and therefore lead to an insufficient pressure for sleep when bedtimes comes. Tip:*

## ***The caffeine fuelled snooze.***

This is an interesting one. Research indicates that grabbing a cup of coffee before settling in for a snooze can help moderate the length of your power nap. Caffeine, when drunk in coffee for example, takes about 15-20 minutes to start taking effect. Perfect for rousing from a short nap and getting back into life and work (do set your alarm though to ensure you don't sleep longer than 20 minutes)



# PRE-ZZZEDTIME RITUALS

To improve your chances of a good night's sleep, having a routine to get you ready for bed is really important. It helps to have those triggers which signal 'slow down for sleep.'

Routine is crucial to getting the sleep you need. Humans are creatures of habit and nobody likes change, so establish when your *zzzed-time* is and work backwards. Ensure you're always winding down in the hour or so before you hit the hay.

Tip:

## *Think like a child*

Many of us, either as children or parents, know the power of a bedtime routine. It often went like this: Bath, supper or milk, then to bed for a story before snuggling under the covers.

The thing is, as an adult, we often 'put away childish things' and stop engaging in similar, comforting, relaxing routines like this.

So, why not reclaim the *bath, light supper (milky drink) and story (reading)* routine and build it into your evening. If you don't have time for all, then pick one thing but make it a special *pre-zzzed* routine and unwind slowly.



## EAT/ DRINK RIGHT

Munching on an indigestion-inducing pepperoni pizza 40 minutes before you go to bed sadly just isn't a great idea. Stimulants (such as caffeine) can, if we ingest them too late in the day, really disrupt our ability to get off to sleep or wake us through the night. And alcohol can be really sneaky - sending us snoozy as we head to bed but waking us during the night as the body gets to grips with processing it, leaving us even more exhausted - especially since our sleep quality deteriorates when under the influence. Tip:

### *Go light and milky...*

If you find you are peckish in the hour or so before lights-out, raid the cupboards for simple carbohydrate, low sugar options and milky drinks. If you fancy a hot chocolate, make sure you check the sugar and caffeine content before you reach for the mug. Making this a part of your routine can also support good *pre-zed* habits too.

# DE-CLUTTER YOUR MIND

Prone to mulling over all of life's problems as soon as your head hits the pillow? Take a few minutes to write down whatever's bothering you on a piece of paper. Identify a small action you can take the following day to improve or amend that situation.

This is a great little tactic which can help to lull the brain into a more secure and relaxed state, knowing that any imminent threat or pressure is under control. Tip:

***Keep nothing in your head...***

Keep a notepad and pen next to the bed for anything that starts to worry you during the night. Jot it down to deal with in the morning.





**SLEEP ZZZEN**

# BECOMING A SLEEP ZZZEN MASTER

## Becoming a 'Zzzzen Master'

Having worked on our sleep 'Zzzzone' and 'pre-Zzzedtime' routine, it is worth exploring the bigger picture of great quality sleep as a long-term practice.

Now, let's approach sleep with a sense of respect. Let's accept that it is more than just a vital survival requirement. It is one of the keys to thriving in life. So, let's explore how we can shape our day to day life around getting awesome sleep. Let's work on becoming a 'Zzzzen Master'; one who is revered amongst friends as the go to sleep expert - when awake obviously.

Here we will explore how to develop our skills in relaxation, dealing with the things in life that can lead to a bad night's sleep and handling interruptions and sleep disruption.

It's as much about what you do during the day to help you unwind and clear your head before bed.

Ahead you will find further tips and ideas to help you develop your sleep skills.

Pick one or two at most and master them before moving onto another. That's how to develop powerful, lasting habits that will serve you well over the coming months and years...

*Sleeping is for life, not just the bedroom...*

# GET UP EARLIER

If you find you struggle to get to sleep at night, think about getting up a little earlier. It's hardly surprising that you can't sleep at 11pm when you've slept in until 3pm. The body and mind need time to get tired, so set the alarm (put it across the room if necessary!) and get yourself out of bed a bit earlier. Tip:

*Make up with your alarm clock...*

Most people hate the sound of the alarm clock in the morning, but it's time to make up with yours. Setting a regular time to get up helps your body get into a great routine for sleep. We're all going to hit 'snooze' on occasion, but if we can train our bodies to get up at a set time, we'll soon have them trained to sleep at a set time too!

So, set it about 15 minutes earlier than you would normally wake... and get up





## SLEEP WHEN TIRED...

I know I've highlighted the importance of having a regular routine, but if you're really not feeling tired there's no point jumping into bed, then tossing and turning, stressing that you're not sleeping.

Engage in a non-stimulatory activity such as reading, listening to music, day-dreaming, or sorting the laundry, until you feel ready to get into bed and doze off. Tip:

### *If You Can't Sleep Immediately, Relax*

We're not all lucky enough to be asleep within two minutes of putting our heads down, and that's OK! Don't beat yourself up over not being able to sleep.

Focus instead on getting some serious relaxation time in. You'll feel rested, even if you're not actually sleeping. And it can be a great way to settle down and ready your body and mind for sleep.

# FOCUS ON YOUR BREATHING

When our stress levels are up, our breathing tends to become increasingly erratic, so focus on breathing in and out at a regular rate. By counting your breaths in and out, your mind is focused on your body, which should start to relax. Try breathing in deeply for a count of four, and then out for a count of four. Extend this out-count gradually, until you're breathing in for four and out for 15/20/30. You should feel your whole body relax as you expel the air in this controlled way. Tip:

*Try a guided relaxation audio...*

It can be a challenge to focus in this way without support. Try a guided visual or audio relaxation which will provide instructions to rest your attention on your breathing. Check out the audio recordings on offer at [www.stressedguru.com](http://www.stressedguru.com) - try the free recordings to see if they work for you.

Breathe





## AND IF YOU WAKE UP

It's quite common to wake up unexpectedly at 3 or 4am and find you can't get back to sleep. Here are some ideas for what to do in those situations. Tips:

### ***Don't toss and turn***

I know it's frustrating, but try not to toss and turn when you can't get back to sleep. Doing so raises your heartbeat and agitates your mental state, so lie back and focus on your breathing and relaxing your body for a few minutes.

### ***Don't clock watch***

Ever noticed how slowly the minutes go by at 4am? Turn the alarm clock to face the wall and try not to worry about how long you've now been awake for, how much sleep you probably got before you woke up and how long it is until you have to get up for work.

### ***If the above doesn't work, get up...***

No, seriously. The last thing we want is to develop the bad habit of lying in bed staring at the ceiling, tossing and turning, and generally tying ourselves up in mental and physical knots because we can't sleep. If, after 10 minutes maximum, you don't feel yourself drifting back off, get up. Avoid turning on all the main lights, and use a torch or dim lamp to see by instead. Try sitting quietly and wait until you feel sleepy again. You will be surprised how quickly that can happen so long as you avoid doing anything too stimulatory.

# FOCUS ON STRESS

Being stressed in the evening means that the hours you're in bed are wasted, as they're spent tossing and turning. This leads to you feeling lethargic in the morning and struggling to focus. Any sleep you do get is likely to be of poor quality.

Stress also means your brain is hyperactive – scientists explain that your active sympathetic nervous system doesn't switch over to the calmer parasympathetic nervous system, which is essential for a good night's sleep. Tip:

*Get to grips with the stresses and strains in your life...*

It can feel a bit like chicken and egg; you are stressed so you don't sleep well, you are tired so you cope less well with the stress.

So, tackle it from all sides - your sleep with the tips in this book and your stress - visit [www.stressedguru.com](http://www.stressedguru.com) for a range of resources intended to help you focus on reducing your stress, enhancing your resilience and wellbeing and generally getting on top of life.



# mindfulness



## RE-LEARN RELAXATION...

We're all too busy these days, with increasing pressures at work and the need to spend time with our children, parents, friends and significant others. It's fair to say that most of us have forgotten how to relax.

Setting aside some time to focus on yourself makes it easier to deal with what life throws at you. There are various apps and guides to helping you relax, but simply concentrating on your breathing or a simple visualisation exercise can help. Tip:

### ***Practice Mindfulness***

There is growing evidence that a daily 'mindful practice' can have a hugely beneficial impact upon many areas of our life, especially in re-learning relaxation. Try '[Headspace](#)' - a great resource offering a free 10 day programme. And visit [www.stressedguru.com](http://www.stressedguru.com) for other resources too.

A man with short, reddish-brown hair, a beard, and black-rimmed glasses. He has a wide-eyed, stressed expression and is covering his mouth with both hands. He is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved button-down shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. A red rectangular box with a thin grey border is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the text 'YOUR TURN' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

**YOUR TURN**

# PLANNING YOUR OPERATION SNOOZE...

Now it's over to you. How do you intend to execute your own 'Operation Snooze'? There are three key areas to tackle:

**ZzzONE:** focusing on everything we need to do to ensure *where* we sleep (our sleep zzzone) is a conducive to quality sleep as it can be

**ZZZed's:** focusing on how we settle ourselves and prepare for really knocking out some quality zzz-ed's. In other words, looking at our routines leading up to settling into bed.

**ZzzEN:** focusing on developing longer term great sleep habits. Becoming a zzzen-master in the art of sleep, rest and relaxation.

Opposite, identify two key things you can implement in each area and indicate when you will put them into effect. You may want to stagger them in order to allow you to find the necessary time to make the changes...

SLEEP ZzzONE - TIME/ DAY/ DATE OF EXECUTION:

Tactics:

Z \_\_\_\_\_

Z \_\_\_\_\_

SLEEP ZzzED's - TIME/ DAY/ DATE OF EXECUTION:

Tactics:

Z \_\_\_\_\_

Z \_\_\_\_\_

SLEEP ZzzEN - TIME/ DAY/ DATE OF EXECUTION:

Tactics:

Z \_\_\_\_\_

Z \_\_\_\_\_



**SLEEP TITE...**

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# SLEEP TITE...

## Reasons and Tools

There has been a great deal of research done into the benefits of getting plenty of good-quality sleep and the health risks of sleep deprivation, particularly over a prolonged period of time. My experiment is probably typical of the experiences of many busy people, constantly pushed for time and pressured (by themselves as well as those around them) to achieve more and more.

It's not easy to introduce new habits, but changing the way you sleep can have instant benefits as well as improving your future health. When you're well-rested and refreshed, everything is easier to do, and you may find that with all the extra energy you're able to make time for family, friends or a new hobby.

Use this book as a guide to keep you on track whenever you notice you're having difficulty sleeping or the quality of your sleep isn't what it was. You'll soon notice a positive difference in all aspects of your life.

You have the reasons to motivate you to change and the tools here to equip you to make those changes stick.

Go to it and execute your own *'Operation Snooze.'*

[stressedguru.com](http://stressedguru.com)

And all the very best in doing so. Stick with it and experiment with these tips, vary them when as you see fit and enjoy your sleep.

I hope you found this e-book valuable in supporting you. Let me know your thoughts on the content and if you have any questions, please do get in touch...

[dave@stressedguru.com](mailto:dave@stressedguru.com)

In the meantime,

Sleep long, sleep easy

Dave

Dave Algeo, Stress(ed) Guru

[www.stressedguru.com](http://www.stressedguru.com)





# OPERATION SNOOZE

*Execute the 'Three ZZZ's Snooze' strategy and achieve real 'Sleep Zzen'*

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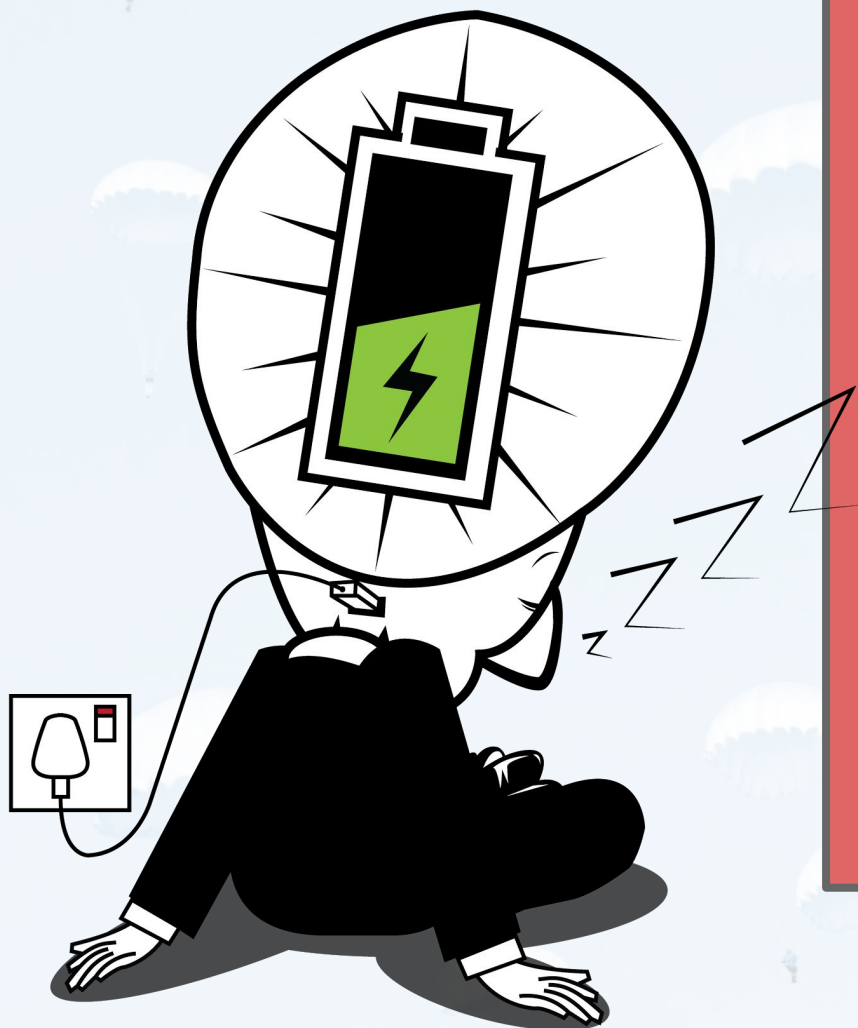
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# 'Operation Snooze'

*Execute the 'Three ZZZ's Snooze' strategy and achieve real 'Sleep Zzzen'*