

How Can Children and Adults Manage Anxiety in Order to Sleep Better?

“A night without dreams is like a cupcake without frosting.”

– **Anonymous**

Sleep is where your body finds balance for its many functions, from the emotional to the cognitive, all the way down to the immune system and we need it to function at our best. Anxiety is a common cause of disrupted sleep or insomnia.

1. Mindfulness

Mindfulness is present moment awareness that involves intentionally observing and allowing your experiences to be without judgement. When you're preparing for sleep, notice the sensation of the sheet, the pillow, the duvet, the blanket, then work through the other senses. Breathe through your nose and out through your mouth. Let your thoughts pass by like clouds in the sky and imagine your worry thoughts sitting on a cloud, floating away.

2. Journaling

Journaling helps take the worry thoughts out of your mind and puts you in more control of the thoughts rather than your thoughts in control of you. Note down your worry thoughts as they arise throughout the day and separate them into what's in and out of your control. Engage in active problem solving to deal with the things that are in your control and try not to spend time on the things that are out of your control.

3. Meditation

Meditation is a very helpful tool for enabling quality sleep. There are many types of meditation, so find one that is right for you. Breath meditation is similar to the mindfulness exercise and the beauty of this style of meditation is that you have your breath with you all the time, so you can meditate anytime. Transcendental meditation is where you focus on a mantra or you can try listening to a guided meditation.

4. Tech detox

Phones or any other electronic device are best kept out of the bedroom. In order to slow down the brain, you need to switch off from your devices including your phone, TV, laptop screen and tablets, at least half an hour before bed. Having your phone in the bedroom is just too tempting to check before bed, during the night or first thing when you wake up.

5. Engage a clinical psychologist

If you are experiencing anxiety and not sure what to do about it, contact Dr Sima Patel for a consultation to understand what anxiety is and to learn effective anxiety management strategies.

“I’ve always envied people who sleep easily. Their brains must be cleaner, the floorboards of the skull well swept, all the little monsters closed up in a steamer trunk at the foot of the bed.”

— **David Benioff, *City of Thieves***