

# PLEASE Skills: Taking Care of Your Mind by Taking Care of Your Body



Remember these as **PLEASE** skills:

**P**  
**L**

## 1. Treat Physical Illness

Take care of your body. See a doctor when necessary. Take prescribed medication.

**E**

## 2. Balanced Eating

Don't eat too much or too little. Eat regularly and mindfully throughout the day. Stay away from foods that make you feel overly emotional.

**A**

## 3. Avoid Mood-~~Altering~~ Substances

Stay off illicit drugs, and use alcohol in moderation (if at all).

**S**

## 4. Balance Sleep

Try to get 7-9 hours of sleep a night, or at least the amount of sleep that helps you feel good. Keep to a consistent sleep schedule, especially if you are having difficulty sleeping.

**E**

## 5. Get Exercise

Do some sort of exercise every day. Try to build up to 20 minutes of daily exercise.

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# Sleep Hygiene Protocol

When You Can't Sleep, What to Do Instead of Ruminating

## TO INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF RESTFULNESS/SLEEP:

1. **Develop and follow a consistent sleep schedule even on weekends.** Go to bed and get up at the same times each day and avoid anything longer than a 10-minute nap during the day.
2. **Do not use your bed in the daytime** for things like watching TV, talking on the phone, or reading.
3. **Avoid** caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, heavy meals, and exercise late in the day before going to sleep.
4. **When prepared to sleep, turn off the light, and keep the room quiet and the temperature comfortable and relatively cool.** Try an electric blanket if you are cold; putting your feet outside of the blanket or turning on a fan directed toward your bed if you are hot; or wearing a sleeping mask, using earplugs, or turning on a "white noise" machine if needed.
5. **Give yourself half an hour to at most an hour to fall asleep.** If it doesn't work, evaluate whether you are calm, or anxious (even if only "background anxiety"), or ruminating.
6. **DO NOT CATASTROPHIZE.** Remind yourself that you need rest, and aim for reverie (i.e., dreaminess) and resting your brain. Sell yourself on the idea that staying awake is not a catastrophe. Do not decide to give up on sleeping for the night and get up for the "day."

## IF YOU ARE CALM BUT WIDE AWAKE:

7. **Get out of bed; go to another room and read a book** or do some other activity that will not wake you up further. As you begin to get tired and/or sleepy, go back to bed.
8. **Try a light snack** (e.g., an apple).

## IF YOU ARE ANXIOUS OR RUMINATING

9. **Use the cold-water TIP skill. Get right back in bed and do the paced breathing TIP skill.** Remember, if you have any medical condition, get medical approval before using cold water.
10. **Try the 9-0 meditation practice.** Breathe in deeply and breathe out slowly, saying in your mind the number 9. On the next breath out, say 8; then say 7; and so, on until you breathe out saying 0. Then start over, but this time start with 8 (instead of 9) as you breathe out, followed by 7, and so on until you reach 0. Next start with 6 as you breathe out, and so on to 0. Then start with 5, then with 4, and so on until you have gone all the way down to starting with 1. (If you get lost, start over with the last number you remember.) Continue until you fall asleep.
11. **Focus on the bodily sensation** of the rumination (rumination is often escape from difficult emotional sensations).
12. **Reassure yourself** that worries in the middle of the night are just "middle-of-the-night thinking," and that in the morning you will think and feel differently.
13. **Read an emotionally engrossing novel** for a few minutes until you feel somewhat tired. Then stop reading, close your eyes, and try to continue the novel in your head.
14. **If rumination doesn't stop,** follow these guidelines: If it's solvable, solve it. If it is insolvable, go deep into the worry all the way to the "catastrophe" - the very worst outcome you can imagine - and then imagine coping ahead with the catastrophe.

If nothing else works, with eyes closed, listen to public radio (BBC, NPR, etc.) at low volume. (use headphones if necessary). Public radio is a good choice for this, because there is little fluctuation in voice tone or volume.

# Suggestions for Good Sleep



Sleep only as much as you need to feel refreshed during the following day. Restricting your time in bed helps to deepen your sleep. Excessively long times in bed lead to fragmented and shallow sleep. Get up at your regular time the next day, no matter how little you slept



Get up at the same time each day, 7 days a week. A regular wake time in the morning leads to regular times of sleep onset and helps to set your "biological clock".



Exercise regularly. Schedule exercise times so that they do not occur within three hours of when you intend to go to bed. Exercise makes it easier to get to sleep and to sleep deeply.



Make sure your bedroom is comfortable and free from light and noise.



Make sure that your bedroom is at a comfortable temperature during the night



Eat regular meals and do not go to bed hungry. A light snack at bedtime (especially carbohydrates) may help sleep but avoid greasy or "heavy" foods.



Avoid excessive liquids in the evening.



Cut down on all caffeine products. Caffeinated beverages and foods (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate) can cause difficulty falling asleep, awakenings during the night, and shallow sleep. Even caffeine early in the day can disrupt nighttime sleep.

## Suggestions for Good Sleep Continued...



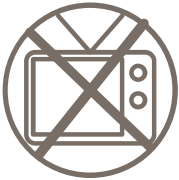
Avoid alcohol, especially in the evening.



Smoking may disturb sleep. Nicotine is a stimulant. Try not to smoke during the night when you have trouble falling asleep.



Don't take your problems to bed. Plan some time earlier in the evening for working on your problems or planning the next day's activities. Worrying may interfere with initiating sleep and produce shallow sleep.



Train yourself to use the bedroom only for sleeping. This will help condition your brain to see bed as the place for sleeping. Do not read, watch TV, or eat in bed.



Do not TRY to fall asleep. This only makes the problem worse. Instead, turn on the light, leave the bedroom, and do something different like reading a book. Don't engage in stimulating activity. Return to bed only when you are sleepy.



Put the clock under the bed or turn it so that you can't see it. Clock watching may lead to frustration, anger, and worry, which interfere with sleep.



Avoid naps. Stay awake during the day helps you to fall asleep at night.

# Nightmare Protocol, Step by Step

When Nightmares Keep You from Sleeping

1. Practice relaxation, pleasant Imagery, and coping skills first, to be sure you are ready to work on changing your nightmares. Do progressive relaxation, paced breathing, and/or Wise Mind exercises; listen to music or guided imagery; review the distress tolerance crisis survival skills.

2. Choose a recurring nightmare you would like to work on. This will be your target nightmare. Select a nightmare you can manage now. Put off trauma nightmares until you are ready to work with them-or, if you target a trauma nightmare, skip Step 3.

3. Write down your target nightmare. Include sensory descriptions (sights, smells, sounds, tastes, etc.). Also include any thoughts, feelings, and assumptions about yourself during the dream.

4. Choose a changed outcome for the nightmare. The change should occur BEFORE anything traumatic or bad happens to you or others in the nightmare. Essentially, you want to come up with a change that will prevent the bad outcome of the usual nightmare from occurring. Write 1 an ending that will give you a sense of peace when you wake up.

Note: Changes in the nightmare can be very unusual and out of the ordinary (e.g., you might become a person with superhuman powers who is able to escape to safety or fight off attackers). Changed outcomes can include changed thoughts, feelings, or assumptions about yourself.

5. Write down the full nightmare with the changes.

6. REHEARSE and RELAX each night before going to sleep.

Rehearse the changed nightmare by visualizing the entire dream with the changes each night, before practicing relaxation techniques.

7. REHEARSE and RELAX during the day.

Visualize the entire dream with the change, and practice relaxation as often as possible during the day.



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# My PLEASE Evaluation

	What I do well...	What I need to work on...	Barriers	Solutions
Treat <u>Physical</u> <u>I</u> llness				
Balanced <u>E</u> ating				
<u>A</u> void Mood-altering Drugs				
Balanced <u>S</u> leep				
Balanced <u>E</u> xercise				