



# Wellbeing

## Sleep

## Embracing Winter

There is a bleak and barren beauty in winter. The trees show off their architectural and naked form and when the sun shines the light is bright but low, casting shadows that are longer than any other time of year – illuminating things in a different and sometimes unusual way.

Winter is part of the rhythm of the year; it's hard for sure, but by embracing winter we may glimpse the exquisiteness that only this time of year brings. If you look carefully there are scarlet berries, fleeting sparkling frosts and even buds on cherry trees that hold the hope of Spring. For some, now is the time of Advent, the waiting for Christmas, when patience in the darkness is then punctuated by light, joy and hope. As the evenings get darker and we draw towards the shortest day and the meteorological winter starts, it's good to pause and take a breath. Winter can be a difficult time for us all - the weather seems gloomier, there's less sunlight which makes us feel tired more quickly. We can leave for work and return home in the dark without seeing much natural light. This is all amplified by the Covid restrictions we've been living through.

It's also a busy time; we can be under so much pressure in our work or family life all of which may lead to some level of anxiety, worry, and even a lack of sleep. We've spoken of the importance of rhythm for our wellbeing previously in [these articles](#). At this time of year, building in patterns of rest and making sure we get enough sleep is important for us. When we don't, we can become irritable, short tempered and sometimes we can lack judgement and make the wrong decisions. Long term sleep problems can affect our health too. Sleep rejuvenates and renews us and it's good for our mental health aswell. Sufficient rest fuels our relationships and gives us some perspective, helping us to slow down and be patient.

As we embrace the dark and cold of winter, practising good self-care, and doing what we can to ensure we get the rest we both need and deserve, will mean that we can also receive the beauty, joy and hope that is present at this time of year.

Difficulties with sleep is a common problem, but it's one that can be helped. If getting enough sleep is a problem for you, there are some really helpful tips from the NHS which can be found by following these links:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/>

### Top tips to get to get to sleep and sleep better (from the NHS)

#### Keep regular sleep hours

Going to bed when you feel tired and getting up at roughly the same time helps teach your body to sleep better. Try to avoid napping where possible.

#### Confront sleeplessness

If you are lying awake unable to sleep, do not force it. Get up and do something relaxing for a bit, and return to bed when you feel sleepier.

#### Create a restful environment

Dark, quiet and cool environments generally make it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep. Watch our video for tips on how to sleep better. [Tips for sleeping better video](#).

#### Write down your worries

If you often lie awake worrying about tomorrow, set aside time before bed to make a list for the next day. This can help put your mind at rest. [Tackle your worries video](#).

#### Move more, sleep better

Being active can help you sleep better. These videos can get you going, but remember to avoid vigorous activity near bedtime if it affects your sleep. [Home workout videos](#).

#### Put down the pick-me-ups

Caffeine and alcohol can stop you falling asleep and prevent deep sleep. Try to cut down on alcohol and avoid caffeine close to bedtime.