

## Sleep Information

Struggling to fall asleep can be caused by lots of different reasons, overthinking can play a big part in this. See below for some tips to help with managing overthinking when trying to get to sleep.

### Things to consider throughout the day:

- **Making space for what you are overthinking** - When we go to bed at night our head becomes 'quiet' as there is little distraction. The brain naturally uses this opportunity to think about important things. This can quickly lead to over thinking. If you can take time during the day to make space for these reflections, you might not feel the same urgency to over think it at night. Make some notes on paper or your phone, it doesn't need to be a long time you spend here, just dedicated reflection time. You can then direct your thoughts onto something else at night and remind yourself 'now is not the time, I thought about that earlier'.
- **Caffeine intake** - Make sure you are not worsening the problem with a high caffeine intake.
- **Blue light stimulation** - The blue light from phones/computers/tv prevent your brain from producing melatonin (the hormone that makes you sleepy). Try to come away from these devices 30-60mins before settling. The 'night mode' setting on phones can help with this too.
- **Exercise/activity throughout the day** - You might feel less tired if you have had a decrease in your exercise levels (injury, extra days off, no gym, high pain day, asthma flare up etc), it might be helpful to go for a walk or do something mentally stimulating to help use some of this energy up.
- **Napping/sleeping late** - When sleep is disturbed it can be easy to nap during the day or have a long lie, be mindful this can might give a short-term gain, but long term might disrupt you that evening.

### Things to help at night:

- **Muscle relaxation** - Physically making your body to relax can be a very effective way in helping you sleep. When we experience negative thoughts and emotions, our body slowly starts to tense too. This can be subtle that we don't notice it happening, however, the more tense you are the harder it is to relax to sleep (check out our resources for a step-by-step guide!)
- **Diaphragmic breathing** - Similar to the above, if we can control our breathing, we naturally reduce our heart rate. Slowing our breathing and heart rate helps you to relax and makes it easier to fall asleep. Focusing on breathing and muscle relaxation are also good ways to quieten your thoughts. (Check out our resources for a step-by-step guide!)
- **Distraction techniques** - Music can be a good way to distract your focus to prevent you from thinking about anything else. Keep bringing your focus back towards the beat or lyrics to channel out any alternative thoughts. You will have to consciously do this as naturally our thoughts wander.

