



## Be Pain Smart – Sleep

### Sleep and worry

Often your thoughts and worries can interfere with sleep. In a darkened, quiet room, there are no other distractions, so it is easy for your mind to get caught up in a cycle of unhelpful thoughts.

Sometimes it can be hard to get to sleep or you may wake up during the night. It is normal to wake up during the night and this could be for many reasons, such as changes in temperature, needing to go to the toilet, staying in the same position for too long, or your pain medication wearing off. This is quite normal and is not always a problem if you can go back to sleep easily. However, you might struggle to get back to sleep if your pain level is increased and this can lead to worry.

Worries are unhelpful thoughts that you repeat to yourself over and over again about something bad happening in the future. It is easy to get stuck or trapped in these unhelpful thoughts and you might start to become afraid about how you will cope with this in the future. Often these thoughts can snowball and churn around in your mind, like you are trapped in a washing machine on a continuous repeat cycle of unhelpful thoughts. This can make the worry seem bigger and more real.

Unfortunately, worrying about a problem rarely helps the situation. You need to spend time problem solving the situation, perhaps even with someone else, to really help the issue.

If you are having trouble falling to sleep or getting back to sleep, try writing down your worries and make a plan to work on them the next day. Writing your worries down and getting them out of your head can help you to let them go. You can make time the next day to do some problem solving about this issue, this is called 'worry time'.

Leave a pen and some paper by your bed to help you. Try using the handout below instead of a phone or device, which can interfere with your sleep.



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### Example worry worksheet

#### What am I worried about at the moment?

*I am worried about my finances. There seems to be more bills every day. I am struggling to pay the old bills, and then new ones appear.*

*I am worried that I will not be able to pay my rent. If I get evicted, I do not know what I will do.*

#### Can I do something about this right now?

*Probably not. I do have a budget in place and if I stick to it I will be able to pay my bills off.*

*There is nothing I can do at 12:00am to help me with this problem.*

#### When will I make some 'worry time' to focus on this worry?

*I will plan some 'worry time' tomorrow at 2:30pm to think about this problem.*



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Now it is your turn, give this section a go the next time you are having trouble sleeping.

**What am I worried about at the moment?**

**Can I do something about this right now?**

**When will I make some 'worry time' to focus on this worry?**

Go the '[worry time](#)' section on the anxiety brick to learn how to use worry time.