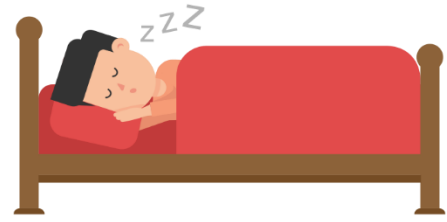




the brain injury association  
**Central Lancashire**



### Tips on improving sleep after brain injury

#### **Establish sleep routine**

- Go to bed only when you feel sleepy at night-time
- Go to sleep at the same time every day
- Get up at the same time every day, use an alarm clock
- Don't oversleep because of a poor night's sleep

#### **Sleep only at night time**

- Avoid naps during the day
- To manage fatigue, keep naps short (maximum of 45 minutes per day) and don't nap after mid-afternoon
- Do not rest in bed, rest elsewhere

#### **Wind down before bedtime**

- Avoid eating late at night
- Stop using technology (TV, tablets, smartphones) at least 1 hour prior to sleep, as the screen light stimulates the brain
- Do relaxation exercises
- Listen to calming music, podcast or meditation
- Read a book
- Write a 'to do' list for the following day to help organise and clear the mind
- Prepare for bed at least 30 minutes before e.g. bath, pyjamas, brush teeth, dim the lights
- Try a warm drink

#### **Spend time in bed sleeping**

- Don't do other activities in bed e.g. reading, watching television, or eating
- Keep the bed only for sleeping
- Don't watch the clock
- If you are awake for a long time, get out of bed
- Do a light, short activity (nothing too stimulating) until you are sleepy and then return to bed

#### **Caffeine**

- Reduce caffeine intake, especially in the afternoon and evenings

- Caffeine is in coffee, tea, chocolate, cola and energy drinks
- Try decaffeinated tea or coffee as an alternative

### **Alcohol, drugs, and medication**

- Avoid drinking alcohol, at night time as it can cause restless sleep
- Try alcohol free versions
- Smoking cigarettes, affects sleep so try to cut down
- Some prescription and recreational drugs can change your sleep patterns, ask for information from Pharmacist or GP. It may be possible, to adjust timing of medication to reduce impact on sleep
- Sleeping tablets can help short term but often cause sleep problems long term as they interfere with quality of sleep and can alter sleep patterns. Discuss medications for sleep with GP

### **Exercise**

- Get some gentle, regular exercise
- Avoid exercising at least four hours before bed-time

### **Time outside**

- Spend some time outdoors every day as daylight promotes the production of melatonin, the hormone we need for sleep e.g. sit outside with a book, go for a walk, do an activity outside e.g. gardening, painting

### **Sleep Environment**

- Make your bedroom and bed comfortable and pleasant
- Remove clutter
- Minimise noise or distractions e.g. use ear-plugs
- Block out light e.g. black out curtains, eye mask
- Make sure pillow and bedding are comfortable
- Make sure the bedroom is the right temperature (18 °C) for the weather
- Essential oils like lavender can be relaxing e.g. drops in bath water, or on a pillow

### **Be patient.**

- It can take time to re-settle sleep patterns so don't expect changes to happen over-night
- Keep using the new ideas and you should start to see changes gradually
- Complete a sleep diary
- If you need further advice, talk to GP

