

# Health Newsletter

-Generali China Life

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Historical Newsletters

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# Farewell 2023, Welcome a Healthy and Safe **2024**

Dear GCL Clients,

As the festive season approaches, we reflect on the challenges we have faced together throughout 2023. Amidst turbulent times, our commitment to protecting your risk and health remained our utmost priority.

In the year ahead, we remain devoted to evolving our services and to working together to protect your health and wellbeing. On behalf of everyone at GCL, we wish you a restful holiday season and a healthy & safe 2024.

With the invasion of cold air, more and more respiratory infections affect us and our families, in order to reduce Infection probability and accelerate the speed of recovery, we need healthier lifestyle to boost our immunity. Here are some tips for your suggestion.

- Eat a healthy diet, consume less salt and sugar
- Reduce intake of harmful fats, avoid excess use of alcohol
- Don't smoke, consider of smoke cessation at any time
- Be active, keep 150 min moderate exercise regularly
- Talk to someone you trust if you're feeling down
- Maintain the updated awareness on epidemic protection
- Keep reading GCL health materials and health newsletter
- Stay tuned for GCL health promotion program and activities



# Prevention for Respiratory Tract Infection in Winter

Respiratory tract infection is a common disease that can occur in any season, but are especially prevalent in autumn and winter. This infection can be caused by a variety of viruses and bacteria that affect the body's respiratory system.

With the recent surge in respiratory infections in China and around the world, it is important to understand infection trends, differences in pathogenic microorganisms and take appropriate preventive measures.

According to the weekly influenza surveillance report of China National Influenza Center, in December 2023, the pathogenic microorganisms of respiratory infections were mainly influenza virus and respiratory syncytial virus. Dr. Mandy Cohen, Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, recently reported that the three leading pathogens causing respiratory illness in the United States are influenza, coronavirus, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).



## Trends analysis

According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are seasonal and regional variations in the incidence and mortality of respiratory infections. In winter, morbidity and mortality are relatively high, while in tropical and subtropical regions, due to the humid climate, bacteria and viruses are easy to multiply, so the incidence and mortality of respiratory infections are also relatively high.

## Differences in respiratory tract infections caused by pathogenic microorganisms

- 1. Viruses:** such as influenza virus, COVID-19, adenovirus, rhinovirus, syncytial virus. **Prevention is mainly through vaccination and avoiding contact with people who are sick.** Treatment is mainly symptomatic relief, such as the use of antipyretic analgesics.
- 2. Bacteria:** such as pneumococcus, symptoms may be more serious, including pneumonia. **Prevention can be achieved through vaccination and good hygiene.** Treatment usually requires **antibiotics**.
- 3. Other microorganisms:** such as mycoplasma infection, the symptoms are milder, but the duration is longer. **Prevention and treatment are similar to viral and bacterial infections, but may require the use of specific antibiotics.**

## The role of nutrition and exercise in the prevention of respiratory infections

Nutrition and exercise are important for the prevention of respiratory infections. **A balanced diet, especially foods rich in nutrients such as vitamin C, zinc and iron, can help strengthen the immune system and reduce the risk of infection.** In addition, the right amount of exercise can strengthen the heart and lung function, improve the body's resistance to infection. Here is a practical nutrition and exercise plan:

### Nutrition Plan:

- Daily intake of adequate fruits and vegetables (at least 500 gram) to provide rich vitamins and minerals;
- Choose whole grain foods over refined grain products to provide more fiber and nutrients;
- Moderate intake of high-quality protein, such as fish, lean meat, beans, etc.;
- Pay attention to the variety and moderation of diet, avoid partial or overeating.





#### Exercise plan:

- Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week**, such as brisk walking, cycling or swimming;
- Strength training**, such as weight lifting, push-ups, etc., to build muscle strength;

#### It is recommended to seek medical attention in the following cases:

- Continuous fever for more than 3 days, wheezing, dyspnea, oxygen saturation decline, and basic lesions aggravated on the basis of the original, if the elderly appear less energetic than before, they should also actively seek medical attention.
- Fever in infants under 3 months of age should be seen at the hospital regardless of the child's state.

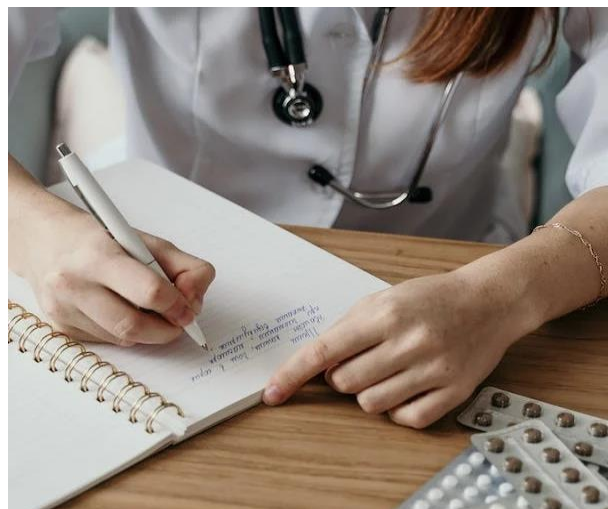
•Infants and children with high fever, elevated body temperature for more than 3 days and poor overall condition, such as shortness of breath, dyspnea, lethargy, refusal to eat, feeding difficulties, persistent diarrhea, vomiting, etc., should be sent to the doctor in time.

#### Treatment

A clear diagnosis is needed before effective treatment can be selected. It is recommended to go to the hospital for corresponding blood (antibody, CBC ) and swab tests (antigen, PCR) etc. to confirm the diagnosis.

**For different pathogen infections, different drugs need to be used, such as bacterial and mycoplasma infections, antibiotics can be used, which will have a more obvious effect.** For viral infections, in the right people and at the right time, there are some antiviral drugs that we can choose and benefit from, remember, these drugs need to be used under the guidance of a doctor.

In addition to cough, fever, sore throat and other symptoms can also use symptomatic drugs to relieve symptoms.



# It' s healthier to eat these in cold season

People prefer to hide in the warm rooms to avoid the cold temperature in the cold season. The outdoor activities and the period of daytime will be decreased in winter. Cold weather and temperature can exacerbate the respiratory and cardiovascular disease and lower temperature can also cause musculoskeletal disorders such as arthritis. Even though the opportunities of outdoor exercise, it is so important to maintain a healthy diet to help prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, obesity and high blood pressure. Today we are going to talk about how to maintain the simple and healthy diet during the cold season so that strengthen our immunity.





## 5 healthy foods you should eat more in winter

### Root vegetables

Root vegetables such as beets, carrots and daikon help the body resist the cold climate and they contain the rich beta-carotene, vitamin C and vitamin.

### Soup

**Enjoying the delicious, nutritious and hot soup is the great choice in the winter.** You can make the soup for your family, such as chicken soup, vegetable soup or mushroom soup etc. You can also add some tofu, beans or meat in the soup to increase the intake of protein, fiber and minerals. Protein and fiber help improve digestion function and regulate your blood sugar level, control your hunger, and thus help us control the total calories you consume and stabilize your mood.

### Whole grain food

Whole grain foods contain the vitamins and minerals which are needed by your body, such as dietary fiber, iron and B vitamins. **These nutrients help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, obesity and type 2 diabetes.** You can choose oatmeal as the breakfast and staple since oatmeal is rich in zinc and dietary fiber which helps improve the immune system function and beneficial for the heart.





### **Foods rich in vitamins**

The food we consumed affects your mood, quality of sleep and the function of your immune system. To improve the function of the human immune system and maintain your good mood, you should consume more foods rich in vitamin C, including citrus fruits, oranges, mangoes, lemons, kiwi, broccoli, bell peppers and so on. Broccoli and cauliflower are both rich in vitamin C, which can effectively boost your immunity. When the climate becomes cold and dry, the body is prone to become dry, itchy and crack. Vitamin E can reduce skin inflammation and promote your skin health. **It is recommended that you eat more than 500g of vegetables and fruits per day to supplement the vitamin E. B complex vitamins are antioxidants that can affect your energy levels and function of brain.** The dark leafy greens and legumes are good sources of B complex vitamins.

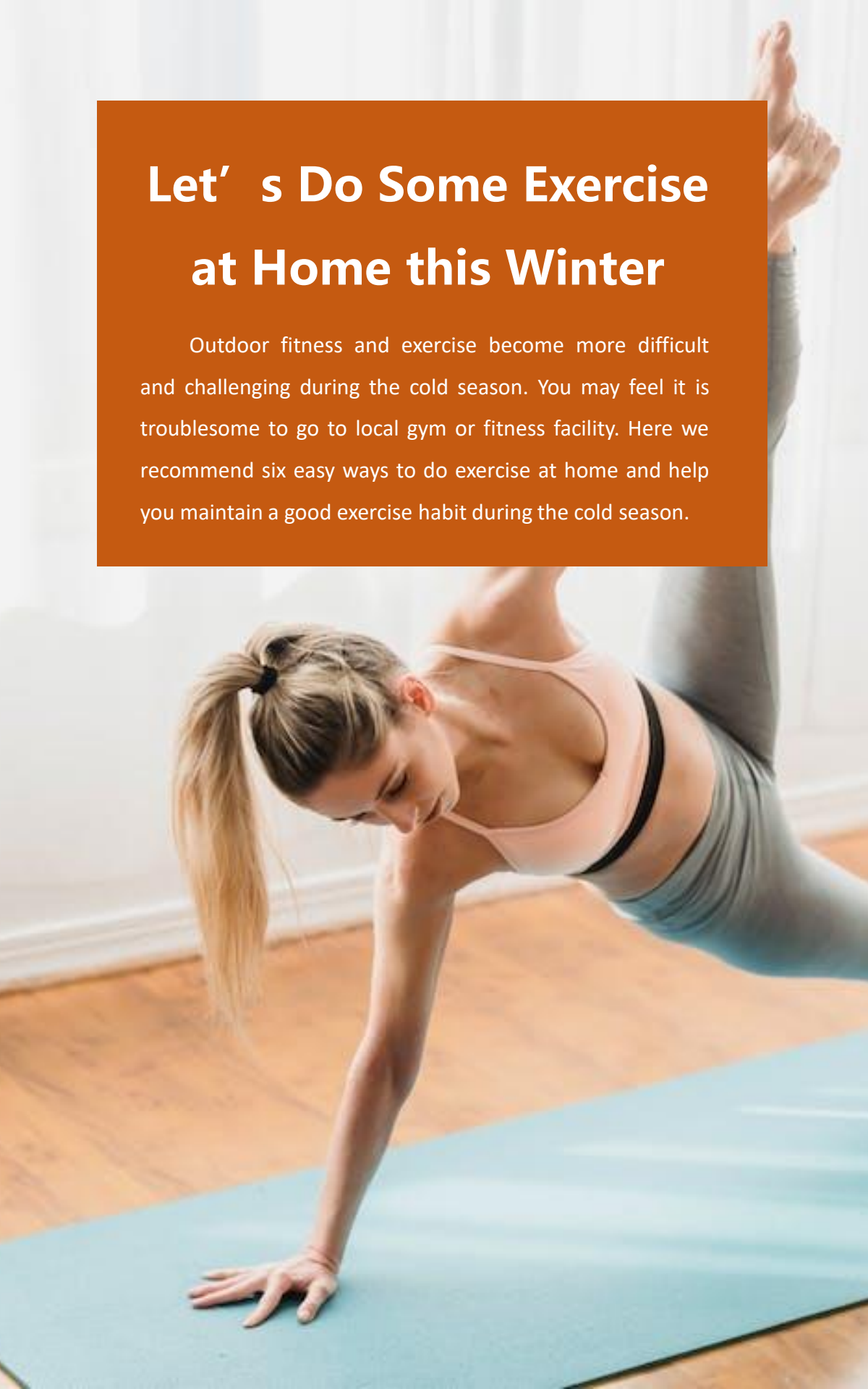
### **Foods rich in vitamin D**

When the daylight period is getting shorter in winter, vitamin D becomes even more important to maintain the health of your skeletal system. Deficiency of Vitamin D is related with the growth dysplasia, weakening of bones, decreased immunity and fatigue. **We recommend that you need to consume the more vitamin D-rich foods during the winter,** such as shitake mushrooms, egg yolks, fish, whole grains, milk, and lean meats.

**Healthy diet can ensure your body to get the essential nutrients, help maintain the good immunity during the winter.** We hope you can eat in a healthy way and stay away from the disease.

# Let's Do Some Exercise at Home this Winter

Outdoor fitness and exercise become more difficult and challenging during the cold season. You may feel it is troublesome to go to local gym or fitness facility. Here we recommend six easy ways to do exercise at home and help you maintain a good exercise habit during the cold season.



## Jumping rope

Jumping rope is one of the best aerobic exercises . In addition to improving your heart and lung function, it can also accelerate the body metabolism and promote the fat burning. **In addition to strengthening the muscles of the leg, hip and arm, jumping rope can burn more than 10 calories per minute.** Therefore, if we complete two sessions of 10-minutes jumping rope per day, you can burn at least 200 calories. We believe that you may have the similar experiences, as long as they let themselves jump for a minute, they will feel breathless.

## Climbing stairs

You may practice climbing stairs if possible. Climbing stairs can not only burn your body fat faster, but also keep your body active and promote your health. **Climbing stairs can burn about 1,000 calories per hour.** The more muscle mass you have, the faster your metabolism is, and climbing stairs also help you build your muscle, which will help you lose fat more easily.

If you like running, climbing stairs is a great way to cross-train with running. It is better to start from 10 minutes exercise of stair climbing for beginners, three times a week. Longer exercise time can be considered as your strength increases.

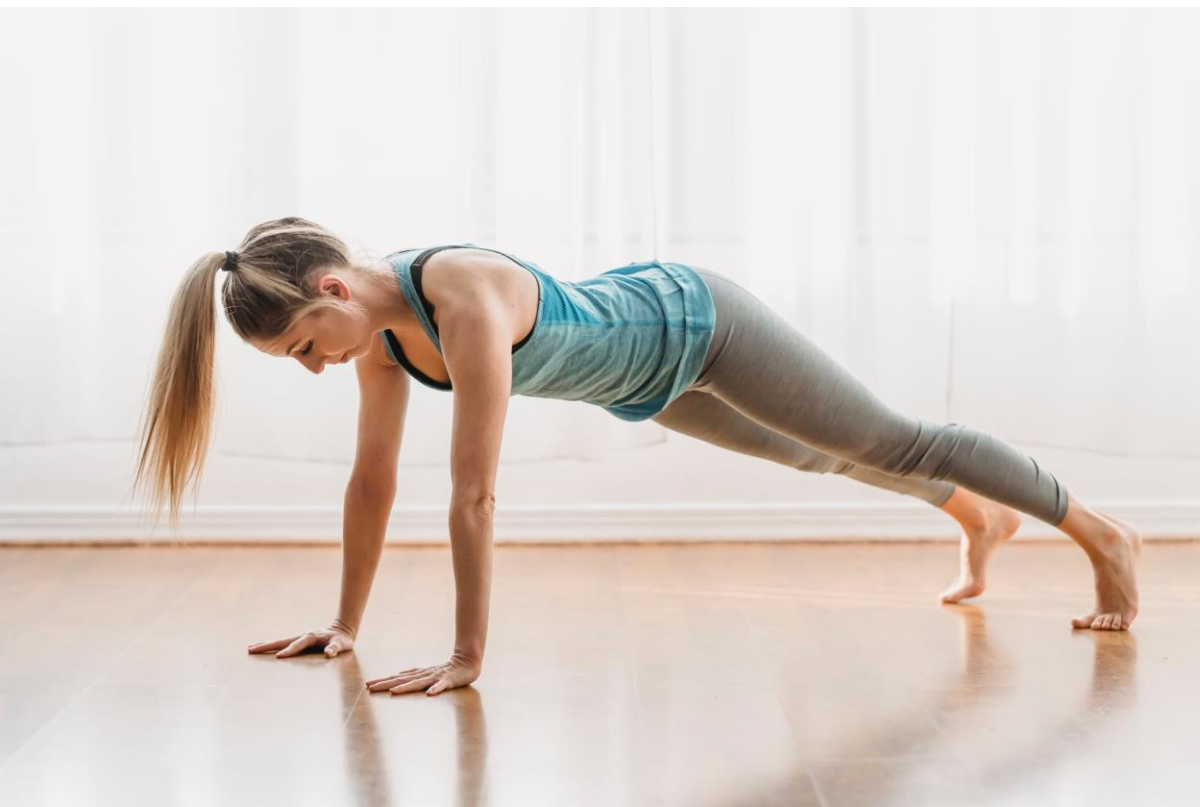
## Walk

Walking is one of the low-shock exercises that does not put too much strain on the joints of the human body. It is an ideal sport for both adults and the elderly. **After you complete 30 minutes of brisk walking, you will burn about 150 calories.** If you want to lose weight, you need to increase the length and intensity of walking with which you also need to follow the healthy diet.

## Dancing (aerobics)

We all know that dancing will give you much fun, and it's also an ideal way to burn calories. You may dance with some fast-paced music, it raises your heart rate quickly. **Dancing can burn about 400 calories per hour.**





## Mopping

Do you know that domestic work can also be regarded as exercise. For example, your body will burn calories during the process of mopping. **According to statistics, mopping can burn about 110 calories in just 30 minutes.** But if you get down and scrub the floor on your hands and knees, you will burn even more calories, around 200. Mopping is actually a good indoor exercise that works on your upper and lower body. Your everyday household chores could be a great way to stay in shape. So, grab your broom, grab your mop and start cleaning!

## Plank

Nobody likes the additional fat on your belly. Plank is a good way to lose your fat even though it is challenging. Plank mainly practice your core muscles and help stabilize your spine

and pelvis. Thereby, it improves your posture and reduces the lower back pain . Plank will burn more calories and engage more muscle groups than sit-up. **If you are a beginner, you can start from 30 seconds-plank practice,** and add more 10 seconds each day as well as the number of planks. The key is to maintain the correct plank posture, please consult your fitness coach for details.

Exercising at home can also meet your daily workout needs and it is more convenient and easier than outdoor physical activities. Remember, **any exercise that raises your heart rate will promote your health.** You are recommended to complete at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activities per week, such as 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week.

# Common causes and countermeasures of insomnia

Insomnia refers to when a person has difficulty falling and staying asleep. Some reasons you might want to fall asleep—but your body won't let you—include lifestyle habits, medications, or physical or mental health conditions.<sup>1</sup> Read on for nine reasons why it may be hard to sleep and what to do, including when to see a healthcare provider.



## Alcohol

While alcohol can make you sleepy at first, it can make it challenging to get a good night's sleep later. Drinking alcohol affects how long you're in the rapid-eye movement (REM) stage of sleep, which is essential for processing emotional memories.

## Bedtime Habits

•Sometimes what you do before bedtime can affect your ability to fall asleep. For example, **taking naps during the day—especially in the evening—may make sleeping harder when desired.** Other potential sleep-affecting habits include:

- Doing activities that increase your heart rate or eating heavy meals within two hours of bedtime
- Engaging in screen time right before bed
- Lying in bed awake for more than 15 to 20 minutes

## Caffeine

While eating or drinking a lot of caffeine earlier in the day is fine, having it close to bedtime can be problematic. Consuming caffeine can provide an energy boost and help you feel more awake, but you can feel those effects for up to six hours. **If you have a caffeinated beverage within six hours of your typical bedtime, the caffeine can keep you from feeling sleepy and falling asleep.**

## Chronic Pain

Individuals with chronic pain—which is pain that lingers beyond three months—often don't get enough sleep or complain of interrupted sleep. The link between chronic pain and sleep is bidirectional. Chronic pain not only results in difficulty falling and staying asleep, but a lack of sleep may lead to: Decreased functioning, Increased physical inactivity, Longer pain duration, More severe pain

## Jet Lag

Jet lag happens when your circadian rhythm, your 24-hour sleep-wake cycle, does not match up with a new time zone. **It can be hard to fall asleep temporarily if you experience jet lag as your body tries to adjust to that time zone.** You can also feel tired during the day and have trouble waking, among other symptoms.

## Medications

**Certain types of medications can lead to or play a role in insomnia,** such as: Antidepressants, Antiseizure drugs, Asthma medications, Heart medications (e.g., albuterol), Oral contraceptives, Over-the-counter allergy, cold, or flu medications, Steroids, Thyroid hormone preparations

## Mental Health Disorders

Sleep problems and mental health disorders—especially mood disorders—are linked. **Some mental health disorders associated with insomnia include:** Anxiety disorders, like posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Bipolar disorder, Depressive disorders, such as seasonal affective disorder, Schizophrenia, Substance use disorders



## Night Shift Work

Research has found that night-shift workers experience sleep loss and are sleepier during their shifts. Like jet lag, working night shifts can affect a person's circadian rhythm.

## Stress

Experiencing stressful events can make it difficult to fall asleep—something that can be measured by sleep reactivity.

Sleep reactivity refers to how much stress interrupts a person's sleep. Researchers found that, on the one hand, individuals who have low sleep reactivity tend to have fewer problems with sleep when they're stressed. On the other hand, people with high sleep reactivity experience greater sleep disturbance during stressful periods.

## What To Do When You Can't Sleep?

When you're at a point of being unable to sleep, there are a few things you can do:

**Focus on breathing:** Another way to quiet your thoughts can be through simple breathing exercises. Deep, slow breathing can also slow your heart rate, which can be helpful if you're anxious or stressed about something.

**Get out of bed:** If you lie awake for more than 20–30 minutes, you should get out of bed and do something quiet until you're sleepy again.

**Listen to a podcast:** Podcasts or audiobooks can be good alternatives to reading if you don't want to turn on a light or strain your eyes. Just remember to find a topic that's not too exciting or upsetting.

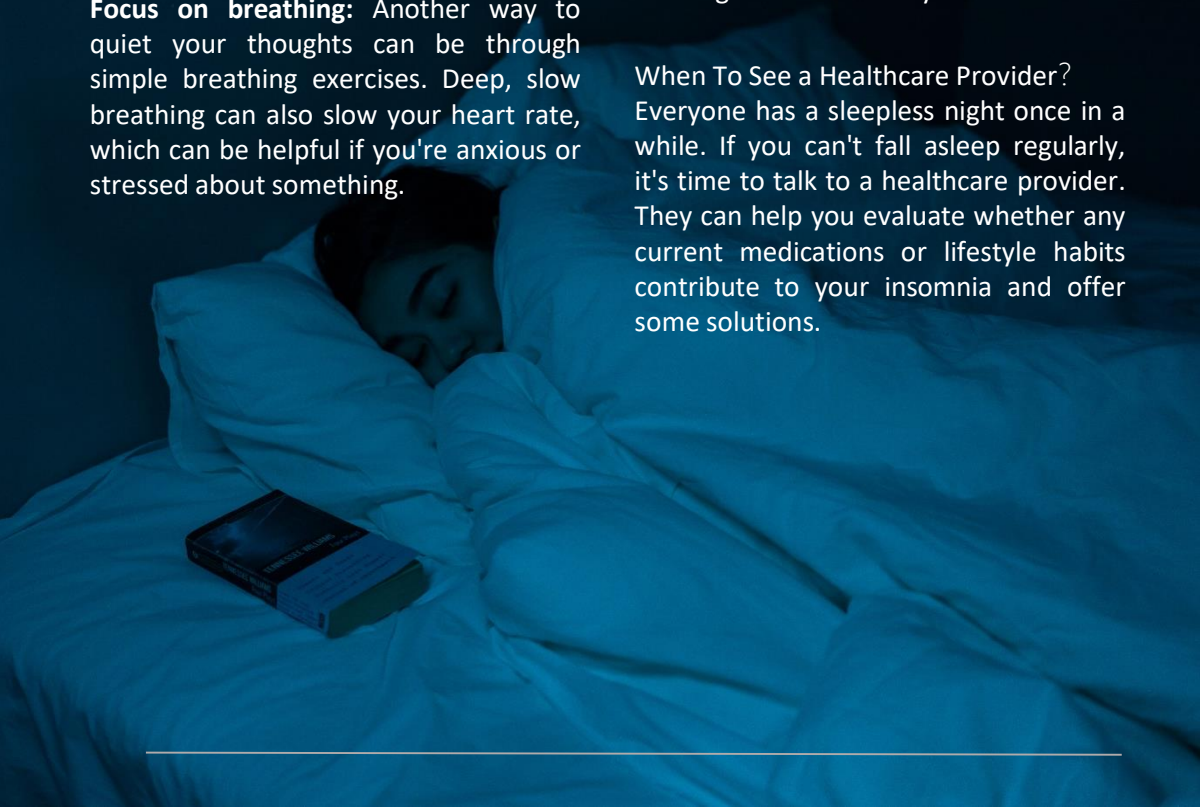
**Make a to-do list:** Try writing a specific one for at least five minutes before falling asleep. **One found that writing out a long, detailed to-do list of future tasks helped people fall asleep much faster** than those who wrote about tasks they'd already accomplished that day.

**Read a book:** Since digital screens can further disrupt sleep due to the blue light that emits, reading a physical book can be a great alternative to reading on an electronic device.

**Try soothing sounds:** A white noise machine or app may help remind you of relaxing times and ease your mind.

## When To See a Healthcare Provider?

Everyone has a sleepless night once in a while. If you can't fall asleep regularly, it's time to talk to a healthcare provider. They can help you evaluate whether any current medications or lifestyle habits contribute to your insomnia and offer some solutions.



# Time Management and Procrastination



Another year is coming to an end soon. Most people have mixed feelings towards December. We love it because it means the end of the year and a fresh start of a new year and new beginnings. We dread it because it means the end of the year and we are running out of time to achieve the goals we set for the year.

Reflecting upon the past year, some people may pick out procrastination and blame it for their unachieved goals. It is quite common to hear people say: if I could stop procrastinating, I would have (fill in your own answers).

Procrastination sometimes feels like a sticky gum on our shoes, hard to get rid of. It is because of the complex causes underpinning it. It actually reveals our deep emotions, desires or wishes. To stop procrastinating, we'll need to have a full understanding of it first and what it means to us, and then we'll be able to do something about it accordingly.





## Understand the types of procrastination

### Perfectionist procrastinator

“I have to finish A first, then I can start B”. If this line sounds familiar to you, you may be a perfectionist procrastinator. **A perfectionist procrastinator wants to be at their best when performing tasks and they find it hard to accept minor and harmless mistakes.** They believe:

- I should do everything well.
- It's a terrible result if there's a little imperfection.
- If it's not going to be perfect, I'd rather not make a start in the first place.

**There is deep-rooted fear in perfectionists. They may seem to worry about failures, but at a deeper level what they fear is that they may be seen as useless, worthless and unlovable.** Therefore in their eyes, everything is a competition where they are constantly under the pressure of losing and failing, which motivates them to do their best and be the best.

### Avoidant procrastinator

Some people don't lack the ability and skills to succeed. What they fear is success itself and the efforts they have to make. For avoidant procrastinators, they believe that in order to achieve successes, they'll

have to sacrifice themselves and their energy. This investment is greater than the gain. They may also think that they'll have to be under the spotlight and get judged. Some people may see success comes with competition, which means that they'll have to compete with others and get hurt or hurt others. Therefore, **avoidant procrastinators procrastinate their accomplishments in order to feel safe.**

### Self-sabotage procrastinator

A self-sabotage procrastinator sabotages themselves in order to revenge. A typical example is a child with strict parents who value grades above anything. The child may feel ignored and less important than grades. **So they make mistakes and fail exams and homework to make parents feel unhappy and dissatisfied.** This then will become the child's coping mechanism into adulthood and manifest as procrastination to express their suppressed emotions.

### Change the habit of procrastination

Clearly no one wants to procrastinate their tasks. But it seems so hard to move forward. Research shows that procrastinators seem to have similar upbringings where their caregivers tend to be controlling and decide what they should be doing, and they are not allowed to question that decision-making.

Growing up in such an environment, it is difficult for children to establish their own identity and accept themselves. **They feel the world around them is unsafe and out of their control. Therefore, procrastination has become their coping mechanism and self-protection to defy their authoritative caregivers.**

Now that we have gained some understanding of procrastination, let's talk about what we can do to make a change.





## Change the unhelpful beliefs

As we study more about procrastination, we find that most procrastinators have a fixated mindset such as perfectionism, self-sabotage etc. So to change procrastination, we'll need to start from changing the old thinking patterns and developing new ones:

•**Self-development:** it is important to know that everything in the world including ourselves is constantly developing and growing. **The world is not black and white, success and failure.** Successes are not the proof of your worthiness but presents on your journey of growing. Equally failures do not mean you are worthless or incapable. They are necessary lessons for you to learn and grow along the way.

•**Self-worthiness:** it takes efforts to succeed. It may come with competition. However it doesn't necessarily mean that someone is getting hurt if your performance is better than theirs. It is not a crime. Instead they may get motivated to become better.

Furthermore, your successes don't mean you'll get swamped with personal attack and jealousy. **When you have a strong foundation of self-worthiness and a deep understanding of yourself, you won't be easily influenced by others' opinions and comments.** You will be able to stay clear and take in what you need for your development.

•**Self-motivation:** it is important to realise that the consequence of sabotaging yourself is a lot worse than just making others feel bad. It may be your way of coping with others' controlling behaviours, but you also jeopardise your own life. Think about it for one second, what would you do if there's no unwanted controlling behaviours to deal with? Would you be more curious and interested in what you are doing? Look for your own inner motivation. It may help to stop your procrastination.



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