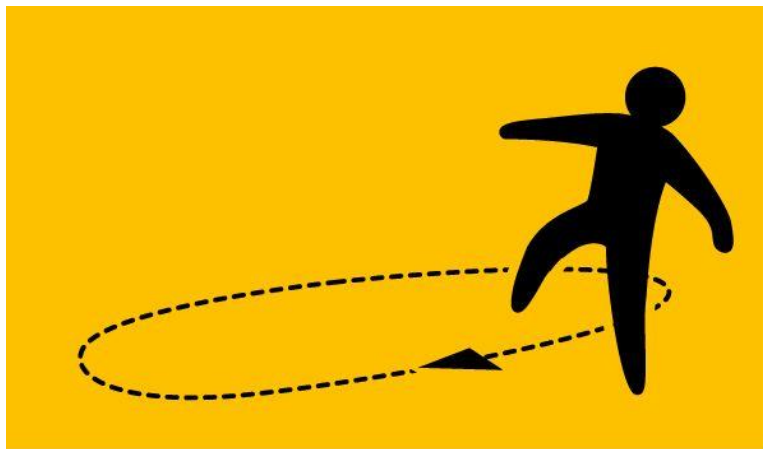


Back on Track Group

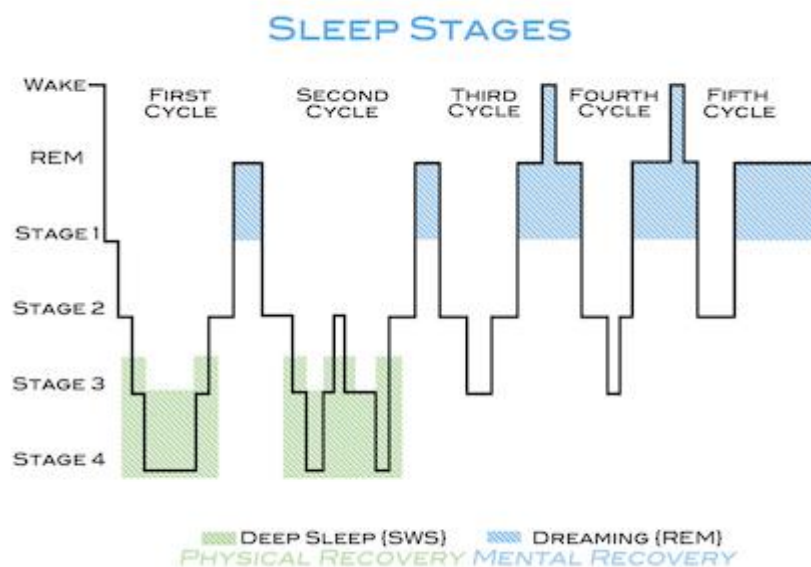
Session 5

Sleep and Relaxation



The Science of Sleep

Sleep architecture :



- 90 minute sleep cycles
- Only 2 phases of deep sleep
- Best sleep within first 4 hours
- REM/ Dreaming sleep in lighter periods of sleep.

Cicadian rythms- Drive to sleep

- Average 'Drive to Sleep' is 16 hours.
- ROUTINE is key to improved sleep architecture.

Improving Sleep Patterns

Difficulty with sleep is common for people who have pain/fatigue. Some people find that they are sleeping too much, while others find that they are not sleeping enough. If you experience problems with sleep there are several things you can do to help yourself.

There is no such thing as an ideal amount of sleep. Some people need ten hours, while others only need five. An average night's sleep is around eight hours. Some people get very little sleep and do not feel any different; others sleep for long periods and feel fine. When the amount of sleep that someone is getting is causing an increase in fatigue that is when it becomes a problem.

Top tips to improve sleep:

The most important point to remember when trying to get to sleep is not to try too hard. Worrying about sleep is much more tiring than just being awake.

Before bed:

- Establish a regular routine each night. This helps to 'cue' you to sleep.
- Avoid 'cat napping' in the day.
- Eating and drinking for the last few hours before bed is likely to stimulate your body so try to do these things earlier in the evening.
- Read or watch television outside the bedroom, the bedroom should be associated with sleep only.
- Try not to watch scary movies, these increase your adrenaline and stimulate wakefulness. Watching comedies is good as endorphins will be released which can help you to relax.
- Set your alarm each night and aim to get up at the same time each morning irrespective of how much sleep you had during the night.
- Taking a warm bath is good for inducing sleep.
- Avoid vigorous exercise prior to bed (apart from sex, which can help you to relax!). Yoga and stretching are good non-aerobic forms of exercise.
- Look at your mattress. If it is too hard it will cause discomfort of your hips and shoulders. You could try a mattress topper or old duvet under the sheet. If it is too soft there is no support for your spine, so worth considering a new mattress.

Once in bed:

- Try to turn your mind away from the days' activities, any worries you may have or what you will do in the future. This is not the best time to think of these things. Think about pleasant places or events or use your imagination to conjure up relaxing images.
- If you find that you are unable to sleep whilst in bed, perform your relaxation routine as good relaxation is still helpful.
- If you cannot get to sleep, GET UP after 20 minutes and go and do something boring and relaxing to allow your body to feel sleepy again. Have some boring books or videos on hand.
- The environment in which you sleep is important. Try and ensure your bedroom is quiet, well-ventilated, dark and a comfortable temperature.
- Even if you did not sleep well, try and get up at the usual time. If your sleep hours vary too much it will become harder to get to sleep the next night. This is very similar to the effects of jet-lag.
- Pillows are essential for positioning and support. It should support the cervical spine in its natural curves and provide support for the neck. A rolled up towel along the base of the pillow may help, or crossing two pillows over in an upside down 'V' shape.
- Too many pillows can cause a strain on the spine resulting in morning stiffness, arm ache and headaches

Adjusting your sleep pattern

Some people may be getting enough sleep, but getting their sleep mainly in the day rather than at night, for example sleeping from 4 am to 1 pm. If this is the case and you want to change it, start by regulating the time you get up i.e. always get up at 1 pm (you may need an alarm clock to help you with this). Then gradually move the time you get up back half an hour at a time e.g. get up at 12.30 p.m. Gradually start to go to bed earlier as you should start to feel

tired earlier. Continue this process until you are going to sleep and waking up at the time you want. This process may increase fatigue levels slightly to begin with, but if you stick with it should help you to adjust your sleep pattern with the minimum shock to the system.

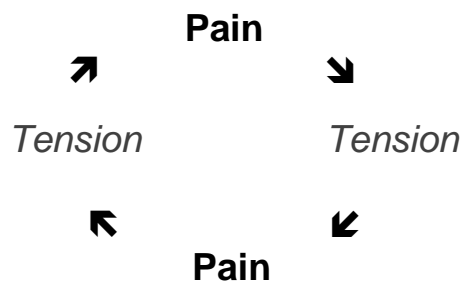
Useful Website:

<http://www.sleepcouncil.org.uk/>

IMPORTANCE OF RELAXATION

Relaxation is the state of not being tense!

When we experience pain, our muscles become tense and tight in an effort to stabilise the painful area and therefore reduce the pain. Unfortunately when this goes on for a long time the muscles in turn become tense and painful and the area of pain therefore increases.



This creates a vicious cycle. A helpful way out of this is to break it consciously by reducing the tension.

To consciously relax is possible but it takes lots of practice - first we must become aware that we are tense, and then gradually learn to stop the tension at an earlier stage in the cycle. With practice it is possible to "switch into" relaxation and change our tension and pain.

To begin, learn the basic breathing exercise (e.g. deep, slow breathing) and try out some of the methods of relaxation.

There is a "menu" of methods that can be used to assist in relaxation, and we have shown you a different one each week.

Here are some other methods you may like to think about:

Music	Stretches
TENS	Posture
Visualisation	Massage
Meditation	Heat
Breathing	Progressive muscle

For a guided relaxation (20 minutes), see the website below where you can download and listen for free – www.paincd.org.uk

Guided imagery relaxation script

I want you to imagine a feeling of warmth starting at the tips of your toes and gradually spreading upwards over your feet towards your ankles.

Just feel how heavy your feet are as they sink into the floor.....
warm and heavy

The warmth is now passing up the front and back of your lower legs passing over the knees and spreading upwards over your thighs.

Let go of any tightness in your thigh muscles and feel the whole leg become..... warm and heavy

Now the warmth reaches your stomach and bottom, feel your bottom sinking into the bed as the warmth passes over it

Upwards across your lower back, upper back and chest. Let go of any tightness held in your back and sink deeper and deeper so warm and heavy

As the warmth reaches your head and passes up the back of your head over your face and feel your head sinking into the pillow...let go of any tightness in your facial muscles and feel the tension drain out of your head

Make sure that your jaw is not clenched and that your tongue is resting gently as the base of your mouth

Feel your head sinking deeper into the pillows as the warmth passes down to your shoulders and cascades towards your elbows.

Let go of any tightness in your shoulders and the warmth drains down past your elbows and wrists right to the tips of your fingers.

Feel the weight of your arms sinking down into the bedwarm and heavy

Your whole body is now heavy, check that your breathing is still slow and even with your stomach rising gently as you breathe in
Now I would like you to imagine that you are at the top of three stone steps. I would like you to take the first step down..... feel the warmth in your body increase as you do so

Now the second step.....feel your body becoming heavier

Finally the third step and as you step down you see yourself in a beautiful garden. It is a warm summer's day and the sun is gently beating down on your shoulders warming you through

A gentle breeze is blowing, rustling the tall trees that stand at the end of the garden. You hear the birds singing and the insects buzzing in and out of the flower beds. In front of you there is a beautiful lawn. It has just been mown and you can smell the fragrant grass in the air. Around the edges are large flowerbeds bursting with bright scented blooms.

Across the centre of the lawn is a stone path way leading to a gap in the trees at the bottom of the garden, I would like you to walk slowly along this path and pass through the gap in the trees into a small walled rose garden.

In the centre of this garden is a comfortable sun lounger with large thick cushions. Walk across to the sun lounger and stretch out on it. Feel yourself sink into the thick cushions

There is no breeze here and you feel the sun warming your whole body as you sink deeper and deeper feeling all the tensions ebb away Just peace and tranquillityListening to all the sounds and feeling warm and heavy

[PAUSE FOR SEVERAL MINUTES]

Now I would like you to slowly get up off the sun lounger and start to walk back along the path to the main garden and the foot of the steps
Take the first step up and as you do so you start to feel lighter
Now the second step and you are becoming more aware of what is going on around you

And as you take the third step up I would like you to open your eyes
Open your eyes and slowly wriggle your fingers and toesstill feeling calm..... still feeling relaxed, but awake and ready to start the day again.