



Here is my February edition: **The power of sleep**



Tim Skene

“One in three people in the UK is sleeping less than they were before the pandemic”. Cybercrew



What’s the effect of that going to be on our minds and lives?

The muscles in our body need to rest, recover and recharge after they’ve been ripped in a regular gym session.

It’s the same for our minds. Our mind needs to rest, process, unravel and regenerate for the next day’s activities and experiences.

Getting a good night's sleep has become one of my key personal goals in life in the past 20 months.

I have experienced seasons in my life where my sleep has become very poor over a prolonged period of time. I recognised how irritable and less productive my mind and activities were becoming during the day. It seemed to be stealing the happiness of my waking hours.

Historically, at the height of my own personal burnout, I joined some free sleep workshops provided by Westminster Council. I had some sessions with a CBT therapist. My real problem here was the **stressful environment that I was working and living in**.

After 4 years, I made a big decision that created a fundamental change in my life, to move out of the Central West End of London and into the countryside in South Birmingham, Worcestershire.

Environment is key. If you’re living in an environment where your mind is having to overwork during a sustained period of time without proper rest intervals, it will respond just the same as the muscles in your body.

Your overactivity will become unproductive and even damaging to your mind and your own lifestyle.

Sometimes, as in my experience, we need to get to that more desperate place to have a mindset shift to begin making changes in our lives. I realise that a decision to move geographically and change jobs is a big one for most people to make.

If there are preventative measures, we can take then it will save a lot of extra work and time in the longer term, as the saying goes, “prevention is often better than cure.”

What might be some other smaller more manageable things we might do to prevent lack of sleep or too get our good night's sleep back!

As the pandemic was beginning to unfold, I did some **research** and listened to what various experts had to say. So, what did I **learn** this time round?

The first fundamental thing I learnt was, that what might work for someone else, might not necessarily work for me and vice versa. I have to **experiment**.

I purchased a new **mattress**, mattresses can be very expensive, however I discovered a very good reasonably priced one during the black Friday sales that had been recommended by "Which". It's been a **useful investment**.



You might say, well I haven't got that sort of money to throw around. It might be worth reminding yourself that this is the most used piece of furniture in your house - you are spending nearly a third of your life on it!

Intentional. Being intentional came up in our recent BWA forum on rest and sleep. For me, I had to make the decision to be intentional to change my behaviour and create new habits to support me having a better night's sleep.

I created a new routine by sacrificing at least 30 minutes of Netflix and exchanging it with some meditation before bed. I find 8-9 hours is about my right sleep time. That can vary for you depending on what works for you. Getting up at a reasonable time and not sleeping in beyond that for more than an hour, if I have been to bed late during the previous night.



I keep a daily **sleep diary** on a spreadsheet on my computer to monitor how I'm getting on; I generally find this very encouraging and motivating, particularly as my sleep has improved recently. I have also learnt the importance of not being too hard on myself, realizing that I will still have the occasional nights where I still don't have a great sleep. That's okay.

Sleep is a big topic and there's is a whole more I could say. To find out more then do please join our February wellbeing workshop on: "Importance of good sleep and how to achieve it" on **Monday 28 February 12.30-13.30**.

BOOK NOW

**Stay tuned for my next edition of Mind Gym where I'll be looking at:
'Values and what makes them important'!**