



You've learned how important sleep is to your brain's performance.
Now learn how you can train your brain to sleep better.

Sleep strategies

Prioritize sleep

More than half of adults *choose* to sleep an hour less on average than the amount they know will refresh them. The most common reason: to get more work done. **However research repeatedly shows that we end up getting less done in the day when we don't sleep enough the night before.** Sleep is as important as a healthy diet & adequate exercise. Most of us need 7-8 hours/night.

Maintain good sleep habits

Good sleep habits include: **(1) keeping a regular sleep and arise time.** **(2) Restricting behaviors that could disrupt your sleep before bedtime** – drinking fluids; consuming caffeine, sugars or alcohol; or exposure to TV, or computers **(3) Ensuring your environment is sleep friendly** (quite, dark, comfortable, right temperature, and free from distractions – like cell phones)

Circuit Break Negativity

Automatic negative thoughts (“I know I won't fall asleep tonight”) perpetuate sleep problems. **Destroy negative thoughts by reframing them** (“I may have a difficult time, but I can use strategies to relax myself”). **Then distract yourself** with personalized ‘circuit breaks’ – for example, breathing slowly. **Let sleep happen naturally as opposed to ‘trying’ to sleep.** Try engaging in a low level activity, like reading, until you naturally feel sleepy. And if you can't sleep – make sure you get out of your bed as soon as possible so your brain doesn't start associating your bed with restlessness.

Travelling? Prepare & then get in the sun

Prepare before you leave by changing your eating and sleeping schedules to those of your destinations as soon as possible before you depart. When you arrive, make sure you get into natural light as soon as possible, and then each morning when at your destination. **Sunlight helps ‘reset’ your natural sleep clock,** which is powered by the chemical ‘melatonin’. Melatonin is produced by your body in sunlight.



Watch out for red flags. Sometimes sleep problems reflect an underlying sleep disorder. If you have any of these signs, see a doctor: *Loud snoring, witnessed apnea (stop breathing for short periods), awakenings with gasping, restless legs, excessive daytime sleepiness*



Working towards goals, and creating new positive behaviors is brain training!

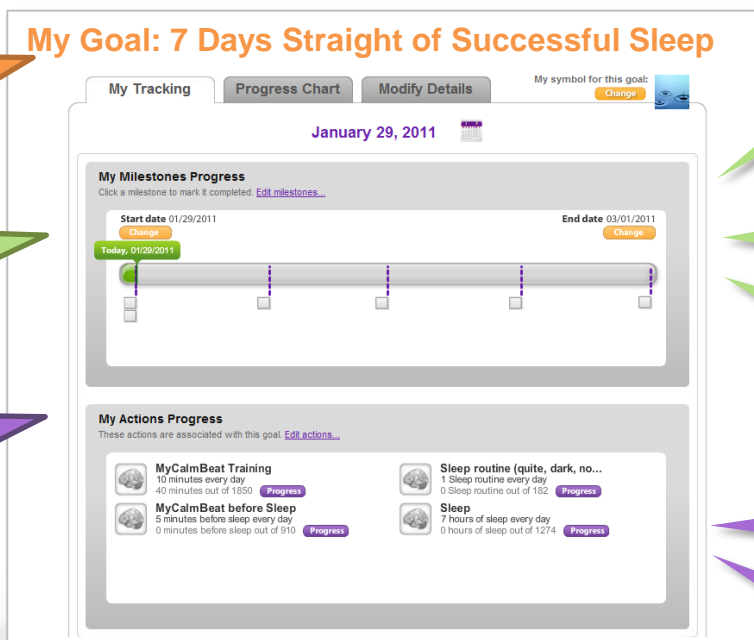
MyGoals is a feature on MyBrainSolutions that lets you set behavior change goals you can track. If you had successfully achieved optimized sleep, what would be different? What would success look like? Make that your goal, and set milestones along the way to reward every inch of your progress. Here's an example:

What will success look like for you?
This is your **GOAL**.

What will success look like along the way?
These are your **MILESTONES**.

What are the regular positive **ACTIONS** you'll take every day?

My Goal: 7 Days Straight of Successful Sleep



For example:

(5%): Set sleep routine & commit!

(50%): 3 days successful sleep

(100%): 7 days successful sleep

For example:

Sleep routine **each** night

7 hour sleep **each** night

Brain Training Exercises you can use to develop sleep strategies

Brain Training Exercises on MyBrainSolutions can help you develop strategies to for sleeping better.

Here are some examples:



Relaxation Room

Use this exercise to learn relaxation techniques like slow deep breathing & muscle relaxation. Practice these in the exercises using guided audio tracks or listening to music provided. Practicing regularly (5 min every day) will help you feel less stressed in general, and will help you develop strategies you can use anytime to relax, like when falling asleep.



Thought Challenger

Use this exercise to challenge negative thoughts and develop more productive thoughts. Learn about 'Thinking Traps' (exaggerations we often make) and the relationship between thoughts and feelings. Challenging thoughts in this exercise will help you develop strategies you can use to challenge negative thoughts automatically.



Positive Affirmations

Use this exercise to develop 'positive self talk'. Learning to use positive statements about yourself where negative ones often occur can help you break cycles of stress and encourage positive frames of mind and feelings. Training online can help you develop the statements you can use automatically when ever you need to break a cycle of stress.



MyCalmBeat

Use this exercise to slow your breathing down to a slow rate. Regular slow breathing (5-20 min/day) will help you strengthen the responses in your body that help you regulate stress over time. It puts a 'break' on your stress system, and can be used just before a stressful event, or when you need to relax, like when falling asleep. Train online or on your smart phone.