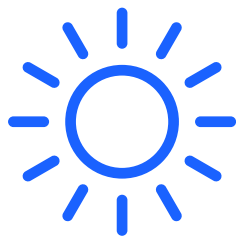


**THE
SLEEP
FIXER.**

THE 4-AREA SLEEP CHECK

A simple playbook to help you understand what may actually be affecting your sleep, before you add another generic sleep tip.



MEDICAL • SLEEP PRESSURE • CIRCADIAN RHYTHM • NERVOUS SYSTEM

Most people assume their sleep problems are caused by one thing.

Perhaps you've been told to improve your sleep hygiene, try relaxation techniques, go to bed earlier, or switch off your screens before bed. Those strategies can be useful, but they do not address the underlying cause of every sleep problem.

At The Sleep Fixer, I look at four key areas. Understanding which one, or which combination is affecting you is often the first step towards making sleep feel easier.

01

Medical Factors & Sleep Disorders

Sometimes poor sleep is not the problem itself. It is a symptom of something else.

Medical conditions and sleep disorders can interfere with sleep quality, make it difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep, and leave you exhausted during the day.

✓	Obstructive Sleep Apnoea
✓	Restless Legs Syndrome
✓	Chronic pain
✓	Hormonal changes
✓	Medication side effects
✓	Other health conditions that affect sleep

SLEEP HEALTH SCREENING TOOLS

Three simple screening tools can help you understand whether further assessment with your GP or a sleep specialist may be useful. They do not diagnose a condition.

•	STOP-Bang – Sleep apnoea risk
•	Epworth Sleepiness Scale – Daytime sleepiness
•	Restless Legs Symptom Check – Possible restless legs symptoms

Key question: Is there anything here that needs ruling out before you treat this as a behavioural sleep problem?

02

Sleep Pressure

Sleep pressure is your body's natural drive for sleep.

From the moment you wake up, your brain begins building sleep pressure. The longer you remain awake, the stronger that drive becomes. When it is strong enough, sleep tends to happen more easily.

WHAT CAN REDUCE SLEEP PRESSURE

-	Napping during the day
-	Sleeping in at weekends
-	Spending long periods awake in bed
-	Inconsistent wake-up times
-	Going to bed before your body is ready for sleep

WHAT SUPPORTS HEALTHY SLEEP PRESSURE

✓	Consistent wake-up times
✓	Building enough time awake during the day
✓	Regular movement and activity
✓	Using your bed primarily for sleep

A useful reframe: sometimes the issue is not that your body cannot sleep. It may simply not have built enough sleep pressure for sleep to happen naturally yet.

03

Circadian Rhythm

Your circadian rhythm is your internal body clock.

It helps regulate when you feel alert, when you feel sleepy, and many other functions across the day and night. Your body clock responds to timing signals from your environment.

✓	Morning light exposure
✓	Evening light exposure
✓	Meal timing
✓	Physical activity
✓	Consistent wake-up times

WHEN THE BODY CLOCK IS OUT OF SYNC

-	Feeling sleepy at the wrong times
-	Struggling to fall asleep until late at night
-	Waking too early
-	Feeling tired during the day despite spending enough time in bed

Circadian challenges are particularly common in teenagers, shift workers, frequent travellers and people with naturally later sleep schedules.

Key idea: Your sleep is not only about how much you sleep. Timing matters too.

04

The Nervous System

Sleep is not something we can force.

The harder we try to sleep, the more difficult it can become. Sleep happens most easily when the brain and body feel safe enough to rest. When the nervous system remains activated, sleep can become difficult even when you feel exhausted.

-	Racing thoughts
-	Overthinking
-	Feeling unable to switch off
-	Worrying about sleep
-	Monitoring your sleep throughout the night
-	Feeling tired but wired

Many people I support are high achievers, carers, parents, business owners or professionals who spend their days solving problems and getting things done. The same qualities that make you effective during the day can sometimes make it harder to switch off at night.

Supporting the nervous system is not about trying harder to sleep. It is about creating the conditions that allow sleep to happen naturally.

THE SLEEP FIXER | SCIENCE MADE SIMPLE

Find the driver. Then choose the lever.

Every sleep difficulty is unique, but most can be traced back to one or more of these four areas. Rather than piling on generic advice, the aim is to identify what is actually driving the problem and focus on the strategies most likely to help.

01 Medical Factors & Sleep Disorders	02 Sleep Pressure
03 Circadian Rhythm	04 The Nervous System

YOUR QUICK SELF-CHECK

✓	Medical: Are there symptoms or health factors that should be assessed first?
✓	Sleep pressure: Am I building enough natural drive for sleep across the day?
✓	Circadian rhythm: Is my body clock getting clear, consistent timing signals?
✓	Nervous system: Am I exhausted but still mentally or physically switched on?

Because when you understand what's affecting your sleep, better sleep becomes much easier to achieve.

Important: This playbook is for education only and is not a substitute for medical assessment, diagnosis or treatment. If you are concerned about symptoms of a sleep disorder or another health condition, speak with your GP or an appropriate healthcare professional.