

DEALING WITH WORRIES AND FLASH BACKS

During the night you cannot solve problems. Sleeping will help you to have a clear mind for dealing with worries at day time. Spend some time thinking intensely about the things you need to do as well and about your worries before going to bed. Write a list of all your worries and of things you need to do the next day. Place the list in a box or under a stone and pick up the list in the morning. If worries come to you at night mentally send them away to the box or stone for safekeeping till the next day.

Disturbing thoughts can ruin time for rest and sleep. Say a silent but yet persistent 'NO' in your mind to unwelcome thoughts in order to send them away. Repeat saying 'NO' over and over again to silence intruding thoughts.

Disturbing images and flash backs may keep you from falling asleep or keep you awake. To get some rest and peace of mind you can imagine that the colors of any distressing image changes from vivid to dull grey. In the mind see the now grey image getting smaller by visualizing it in the distance as when you see a motorcycle disappearing in the horizon.



MEDITATION

Use your favorite meditative technique to help you calm the mind and body, as it will help you sleep. Lie on the back or side, meditate quietly and allow yourself to drift into sleep.

Simple meditations can also be used by children.



Sleeping medication is not a good solution for more than a few days. It can create dependency, day time dizziness and will often exaggerate insomnia when you stop taking sleeping medication.

Sleep helps you cope in difficult times



Get enough sleep!



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



It is normal not to sleep well during periods of stress, crises or in a disaster. Sleep disturbances are normal reactions to abnormal events and it will be difficult falling asleep and staying asleep. People will often experience flash backs, bad dreams and distressing thoughts.

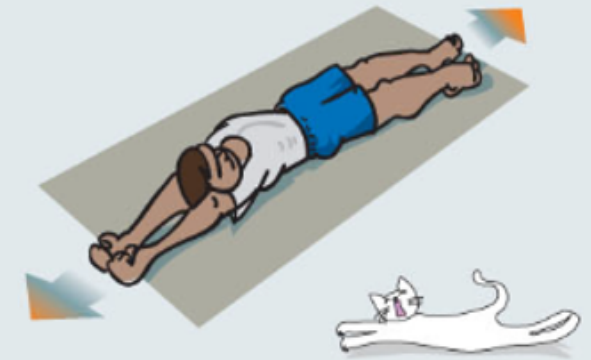
Body and mind need sleep for all vital functions. You need sleep in order to care for others and to take care of yourself. Lack of sleep gives you bad judgment, makes you short tempered, reduces your energy, makes you feel depressed and weakens the immune system, so you will catch a cold, get the flu etc.

- Read the relaxation instruction aloud for a colleague and let him/her read it back to you.
- Talk to other volunteers about what works for them. Give them your best tips on sleeping well.



GUIDELINES FOR BETTER SLEEP

- Cut down on coffee, soft drinks with caffeine, cigarettes and alcohol.
- Establish a bedtime ritual.
- Go to sleep and get up at the same time every day.
- Sleep in a comfortable and preferably dark environment.
- Eat well and regularly.
- Get regular exercise.
- Try to apply all the techniques in this brochure to get familiar with them.



RELAXATION

Relaxation eases the road to sleep and gives better quality of sleep. In this relaxation exercise first you stretch and yawn and afterwards you relax the entire body.

Lie down on your back, breathe in and stretch arms and legs as to become as long as possible. Hold the stretch and let go with a big sigh. Repeat two more times. Then go on to tense each muscle group as indicated in the bullet points below. Make a pause between the instructions where you experience the effect of letting go of tension in the muscle group.

- Curl the toes – hold – let go.
- Stretch the heels away from the body – hold – let go.
- Tense the buttocks – hold - let go.
- Draw the belly button inwards – hold - let go.
- Lift the lower back from the floor – hold - let go.
- Pull the shoulder blades downwards and towards one another – hold - let go.
- Make a fist and lift the arms slightly – hold - let go.
- Press the back of the head to the floor – hold – let go.
- Make a frown - close the eyes and mouth – hold – let go.

Lie for some time feeling the effect in the entire body.