Strategies for success

How to reduce thinking and worrying in bed

Spend time worrying during the day

Make sure that you devote some time for thinking and worrying. This should end at least a couple of hours before you go to bed.

Then, when the thoughts come when you are in bed, try saying to yourself gently (over and over if necessary):

Stop! I thought about this today, I'll think about it again tomorrow. Now is the time for sleep.

More sleep is lost through worrying about ‘not sleeping’ than anything else

Try not to get too upset about missed sleep. The loss of several nights’ sleep has been shown not to impair test-taking abilities nearly as much as most people think.

Remember to treat yourself gently

Instead of ‘forcing’ yourself to fall asleep, you might find it helpful to say to yourself something like:

‘There is nothing more that I can do today. There’s nothing I can do until tomorrow. I’m just going to let go now.’

Stress is the most common cause of insomnia.

Try to keep a positive attitude and plan your studies ahead.

If sleep difficulties continue, you may want to talk to a counsellor or your G.P. to get some more ideas on how to sleep soundly.
Introduction

Time Management
- Work consistently. If you attend lectures, tutorials and labs, do your reading and complete your assignments on time it is more likely you will succeed
- Plan ahead for busy times
- Keep an overall map of the whole semester in mind
- Allocate more time to do the most important things
- Use your most effective study time of the day to do the more challenging tasks

Self Confidence
- Believe in yourself — you wouldn't have succeeded at getting into Uni if you didn't have ability
- Keep reminding yourself of your short and long term goals for going to Uni
- Set achievable goals
- Identify what you are doing well and repeat these strategies
- Change thinking patterns that undermine your self confidence

Stress Management
- Find a balance between hard work and relaxation
- Keep a sense of perspective
- Don't neglect other areas of your life
- Prioritise between paid work and study commitments

Networks
- Spend time getting to know other students — informal discussions with other students and lecturers are an important part of the learning process
- Ask for help when you need it
- Utilise the resources to support you at University such as counselling, the learning skills unit, disability and careers advisors
- Work on getting key people in your life on side

Negotiation
- Learn to negotiate with other students, academics and key people in your life
- This requires diplomacy, give and take and consideration of other people's needs and goals, whilst also taking your own into account
- Ask for extensions or concessions earlier rather than later

Study Skills
- Break big tasks into smaller achievable chunks or sub tasks
- Be prepared for lectures and tutorials by keeping up with readings
- Practise presentations on friends, family or pets
- Find support if you have areas of weakness — tutoring, mentoring, student learning unit

Sleeping soundly for success

Plan time for exercise
Schedule time throughout the week for gentle exercise. This could involve walking, swimming, cycling. Including exercise in your routine will lead to a more restful sleep. Try to avoid strenuous exercise before bedtime.

Arrange your bed to be a pleasant place for sleep
Use your bed only for sleeping — not for eating, studying, or watching TV.

Develop a consistent sleep rhythm
Establish a regular time to go to bed and get up at about the same time each morning. Aim for eight hours sleep per night!

If you don’t fall asleep
If you have not fallen asleep within 30 minutes of going to bed, get out of bed and do something that will make you feel tired.

Avoid caffeine within six hours of bedtime
Do some form of relaxation each day
Think about a relaxing scene. Practice muscle relaxation exercises. Try yoga or aromatherapy.

Natural remedies to help you sleep
- A warm bath or shower
- A glass of warm milk
- Chamomile tea
- Comfortable room temperature
- Have the room in dim light before bedtime