

# One Simple Trick to Beat Sleep Anxiety & Fall Asleep Fast

No matter how tired you are, sleep anxiety can prevent you from falling asleep and getting the valuable shut-eye, you need to be happy and full of beans in the morning.

The more your mind races the more restless and agitated you feel, as the mind spins thought trail after trail of random worries, predictions, fears and contemplations about all manner of things.



Before long, you inherit the added worry of worrying how late it's getting and how tired you'll feel in the morning.

It's annoying, frustrating and makes you feel groggy the next day.

Not only do you end up physically exhausted the following day, but also mentally out of steam having wasted your resources on those unnecessary but uncontrollable nighttime demons in your head.

But worry not, because a natural solution is at hand...

We already know that using the breath to still the mind is a common practice in meditation, but few people know that it's also used medically to calm a person having an anxiety attack.

I was actually told this by a guy who had been rushed to hospital once while having an attack. He said the nurse who treated him used this technique to bring his heart rate down and enable him to catch regain control.

The technique is to breath in deeply and hold for a count of 6, and then breath out again, slowly.

The NHS (National Health Service) in the UK actually recommends the following:

- Fill up the whole of your lungs with air, without forcing. Imagine you're filling up a bottle, so that your lungs fill from the bottom.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Breathe in slowly and regularly counting from one to five (don't worry if you can't reach five at first).
- Then let the breath escape slowly, counting from one to five.
- Keep doing this until you feel calm. Breathe without pausing or holding your breath.

So that's 5 and not 6, but very similar to what I was taught.

Breathing in this way instantly begins to slow everything down and relax the mind and body in synchronization.

And so a few years ago I began using this simple technique when my mind wouldn't stop racing in bed at night.

Instead of getting caught in that cycle of tossing and turning, I would simply lay on my back and deep breathe in this way until I woke up having no recollection of when I'd dropped off.

Of course, the duration which it takes to fall asleep varies depending on how anxious/worried you are about the day ahead or whatever problems you may be dealing with at the time, but this really does work and goes to show again just how powerful the breath is.

And it's no surprise really, considering it is our life force, the supporting mechanism that keeps us finely straddled between life and death.

So try it...slowly breathe in and hold for 5 or 6 seconds, and then release slowly until your lungs are deflated. Focus intently on what you are doing. Feel the breath come in and out of your body and channel your focus on that action.

What you'll quickly feel is that it actually takes quite some effort and concentration to do, especially because your body is already tired – it's just your mind that won't settle – and I think this is why it is so effective.

To really focus on breathing in this way takes your mind off the swirling thoughts and channels your energy into the breathing action, which helps the tiredness overcome the anxiety and ultimately helps you fall asleep.

This isn't just useful for bouts of sleep anxiety but for anytime when you need to calm down quickly.

One last little tip. If this doesn't help first time, or you are still awake after 15 minutes of trying, get out of bed and go into another room for 10 minutes. The reason for this is that leaving the environment you feel uncomfortable in breaks the association; you essentially release yourself and take yourself out of the situation.

Go into the living room or kitchen. Sit quietly, and if you have to put a light on make it a dim one. Do some light stretching exercises or yoga poses, or read a few pages of a light-hearted book or magazine.

When you feel calm, return to your bed and begin your breathing again.