



## ANXIETY SLEEP TIPS



Cortisol is a hormone that is raised during times of stress and makes us feel alert and awake. Therefore, if we are stressed or anxious, it will be much harder for us to fall asleep at bedtime. Here are some strategies which might be helpful to use in the day or in the bedtime routine to ensure anxiety or stress can be reduced as much as possible before trying to go to sleep.

### TALKING TIME

Allocate some talking time about problems of worries and have a debrief at the end of the day. Avoid talking about these at bedtime when the child is going to bed

### ROUTINE

Establish a calm and relaxing bedtime routine, especially for children who struggle with a transition. It is always nice to know what to expect and have some consistency and familiarity. You could try some relaxation techniques in your bedtime routine

### PLANNERS

Having a daily or weekly planner can help to ease anxiety over what is going to happen and when it is going to happen. Having some time to look over the daily or weekly planner on an evening can be incredibly effective



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### SENSORY DEEP PRESSURE

Deep pressure massage (such as gentle firm strokes along the arms, legs, or back) activates the body's calming nervous system response, helping to reduce anxiety and signal that it's safe to rest.

### WORRY MONSTERS

Worry monsters offer a tangible, playful way for children to "hand over" their anxious thoughts before bed – writing or drawing a worry and posting it into the monster's mouth can provide a powerful sense of release and closure.

### BOOKS

Books and storytelling create a consistent, predictable wind-down ritual that eases the brain into a quieter state; for anxious minds, repetition and familiarity in a favourite story can be especially soothing.

### PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Slowly tensing and releasing each muscle group from the toes upward – gives the body something concrete to focus on, gently redirecting restless energy and inviting physical calm.

**Used together or individually, these strategies honour the unique ways neurodivergent minds and bodies experience the world, meeting each person where they are.**