

Ending the Sleep Struggle: Shifting from Effort to Acceptance

THE SLEEP EFFORT TRAP



Catastrophic Thinking

Worries like "I won't function tomorrow" drive anxiety and maladaptive behaviors like napping.



Performance Pressure

High expectations for sleep duration paradoxically increase the physiological arousal that prevents sleep.

Effort Backfires

Trying harder to sleep creates mental arousal that strengthens the body's wakefulness system.

TOOLS FOR COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING



"My Body Knows How to Sleep"

Sleep is a natural, automatic process; your job is to get out of its way.



Rest Still Counts

Lying calmly preserves more energy and resources than engaging in an agitated struggle for sleep.



Accept the Wakefulness

Observing thoughts without struggling against them reduces arousal and aligns with natural deactivation.

Reactive Responses vs. Planned Troubleshooting

REACTIVE RESPONSE (Anxiety-Driven)	PLANNED RESPONSE (Calm/Consistent)
Wake Time: Sleeping in or hitting snooze	Wake Time: Sticking to a consistent wake time
Bedtime Activities: Clock-watching and ruminating	Bedtime Activities: Using low-arousal activities
Day-After Changes: Napping or canceling plans	Day-After Changes: Maintaining normal daytime activities