



My sleep window

An Everyday Insight tool
mysleeptoolbox.com



Your time in bed, built from your sleep diary. Read “Before you start” first, and keep up the diary while you use the window.

Name _____ Date _____

Before you start

Limiting your time in bed can make you very sleepy during the day, especially in the first weeks. Talk with a health care provider first if you have bipolar disorder, a seizure disorder, sleep apnea, sleepwalking or other unusual behavior during sleep, a history of falls, or another health problem, if you take medicine that makes you drowsy, if you’re pregnant, or if you drive or use machinery for work. Don’t drive or do anything risky when you feel drowsy.

Stop the window and talk with a health care provider if you nod off during the day without meaning to, have a seizure or a fall, or notice your mood running unusually high, your thoughts racing, or that you need much less sleep than usual. If you already doze off easily during the day, see a doctor before you start.

There are gentler ways to start. Sleep compression shrinks your time in bed a little at a time instead of all at once. It’s often a better fit for older adults and for anyone who can’t safely be very sleepy. You can also skip the window and keep using the diary and the other tools.

The window isn’t built for rotating shifts.

1 What your diary shows

Use your complete nights from the last two weeks, the ones where you could work out total sleep. You need at least 7. Two weeks of nights give a steadier average. To average, add up the nights and divide by how many there are.

Complete nights	Average total sleep	Average time in bed
_____	_____	_____

2 Which kind?

Check one.

☐ Sleep window

Your time in bed starts at how much you sleep now, then grows as your sleep fills it.

☐ Sleep compression

Your time in bed starts 30 minutes shorter than it is now. After that, in any week your efficiency is under 85%, it shrinks by up to 30 more minutes, never below how much you sleep now.

3 What time will you get up every day?

The same time all seven days, weekends included. Pick a time you can keep.

Wake time _____

4 How long is your window?

For a sleep window, start at your average total sleep, rounded to the nearest 15 minutes. For sleep compression, start 30 minutes shorter than your average time in bed, but not shorter than your average total sleep. Either way, never less than 5 hours and 30 minutes in bed. That’s the shortest window this worksheet uses, even if you sleep less than that now.

Time in bed _____

5 Your bedtime

Your wake time minus your window. Go to bed no earlier than this, and only when you’re sleepy. Later is fine. For example, a 6-hour window with a 6:30 AM wake time gives a bedtime of 12:30 AM.

Bedtime _____ Starting on _____

The first weeks are often the hardest, and you may be sleepier during the day. Don’t drive or do anything risky when you feel drowsy.



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1 of 2



6 Check it each week

After seven mornings, work out the week’s sleep efficiency from your diary. Add up total sleep for the week’s complete nights, divide by their time in bed added up, and multiply by 100. Then use the rule.

Before you decide, think about this week’s days. If you nodded off while driving, at work, or in the middle of things, keep your window where it is or stop it, and talk with a health care provider.

90% or higher	Bedtime 15 minutes earlier.
85 to 89%	No change.
Under 85%	Bedtime 15 minutes later, never less than 5 hours and 30 minutes in bed.
Fewer than 5 complete nights	No change. The window stays the same for another week, since a few nights can swing the average a lot.
Most nights outside your window	No change. Try keeping the window for the next seven nights, and the next check will show what it can do.

With sleep compression

In any week your efficiency is under 85%, your time in bed shrinks by up to 30 more minutes, never below your average total sleep. The rest of the rule is the same.

You decide

Every change is your call. The window keeps growing until efficiency stays under 85% at the longer length, or until you feel rested during the day. Then you can keep it where it is. Clinicians sometimes adjust these numbers. If you work with one, follow their plan.

Week by week

WEEK OF	COMPLETE NIGHTS	NIGHTS INSIDE THE WINDOW	EFFICIENCY	WHAT THE RULE SUGGESTS	WHAT I DECIDED, AND MY NEW WINDOW

While you’re building your window

- Go to bed only when you’re sleepy.
- Use the bed only for sleep and sex.
- If you can’t sleep, get up, and go back when you’re sleepy.
- Get up at the same time every day.
- Avoid napping during the day. If you’re too sleepy to drive or work safely, a short nap early in the afternoon is the safer choice.

The stimulus control handout explains each one.

