

## WHY CAN'T MY DAUGHTER GET TO SLEEP AT NIGHT?

**Q** My daughter, who is nine, is having problems falling asleep at night, and gets very worked up. She starts the day tearful and irritable and nearly falls asleep in lessons.



**A** 'Sleep problems can arise at this age as children enter the second stage of their psychological development as mini adults,' says psychologist Dr Nerina Ramlakhan, an authority on sleep and stress and author of *Tired But Wired* (Souvenir Press, £12.99\*). 'They develop their own worries, and have to redefine their sense of safety.' Dr Ramlakhan offers these general tips:

- **Adopt wind-down routines.** Minimise time with computers, iPads and smartphones in the 90 minutes before bed; avoid overexciting books; run a warm bath with lavender oil, but not too close to bedtime.
- **Create a calm environment.** Light levels should be low (try a pink or amber bulb, as research shows blue light can block the sleep hormone melatonin). Remove clocks and watches, as fixating on the time can make the problem worse. Encourage your daughter to think about resting even if she can't sleep.
- **If she tends to wake at the slightest sound use 'white noise',** such as a fan or a specific white noise machine – try Marpac and Homedics brands.
- **Ensure she eats a good breakfast.** Protein helps boost the production of melatonin, so try eggs, peanut butter on toast, porridge with chopped nuts, and make sure she sips plenty of still water throughout the day. (Avoid sugary or fizzy drinks and juices.)
- **Give her an outlet for creativity.** Activities such as music, writing or dancing are vital for creative types with active minds that don't switch off easily.
- **But avoid over-scheduling.** Downtime during the day and after school is important. Make sure she gets enough exercise during the day, but not just before bed.
- **Try the pre-sleep yoga routine in *Tired But Wired*.** This describes the child's pose, followed by legs up wall pose, followed by corpse pose. It takes under ten minutes and is excellent at calming the nervous system just before bed. Even lying down with legs up the wall, or over the side of the bed and breathing deeply and gently into the belly is excellent before sleep.
- **Share the perfect bedtime story.** Encourage her to talk to you about the good things – including the small ones – that happened during her day.

Email your questions to [s.stacey@you.co.uk](mailto:s.stacey@you.co.uk)



## READY, JET, GO!

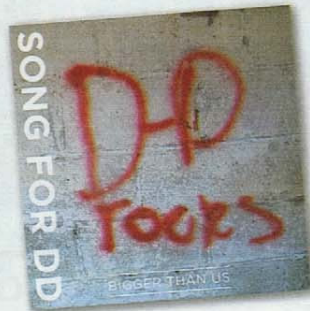
Before a recent journey to Australia (in economy seats), I went to Nelsons Homeopathic Pharmacy in London and was given a remedy to help jet lag. Result! My husband and I both slept through most of the 22 hours on board, both going and coming back, which is unprecedented, and had very few symptoms of jet lag. Visit [nelsonsparmacy.com](http://nelsonsparmacy.com), tel: 020 7079 1288, email: [mailorder@nelsonshp.com](mailto:mailorder@nelsonshp.com).

## SONG IN THE KEY OF LOVE

Last August, a dear friend emailed me to say that her grandson David (DD), aged 16, had died 'peacefully at home, surrounded by love and family'. It was a private death but it became international news. DD had a brain tumour, diagnosed in 2007, and endured years of treatment. If he had been diagnosed when his symptoms first became evident, his chance of survival would have been greater. After his terminal diagnosis, DD and his mother Sacha Langton-Gilks campaigned for greater awareness of the symptoms of this condition, which is the biggest killer of youngsters after accidents. For Brain Tumour

Awareness month, a charity single called 'Song for DD', written and performed by the prisoner students of DD's music teacher father, has been released (download it on Amazon, Spotify and iTunes for £1.29).

All proceeds go to HeadSmart ([headsmart.org.uk](http://headsmart.org.uk)), the campaign for early diagnosis of children's brain tumours, and CLIC Sargent ([clicsargent.org.uk](http://clicsargent.org.uk)), which supports children with cancer.



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**2 SPEND** HPE (Human Performance Engineering) Clothing, created for elite sportspeople, features compression fit (to aid muscle recovery), wicking fabrics (to absorb sweat so skin can breathe) and FreshFit silver technology to prevent bacteria build-up, plus super-flattering designs. From £35, [hpe-shop.com](http://hpe-shop.com).

**3 SPLURGE** Vevie (right) offers feminine but high-performance workout wear that really lasts, with a pastel-coloured collection of non-intimidating active jackets, yoga bottoms, swimsuits and vests. From £40, [vevie.com](http://vevie.com).

