

Middle-of-the-Night Reset


A short worksheet for calming your mind and body
when you wake up and cannot fall back asleep.



When You Wake Up and Can't Get Back Down

Your body is built to stay alert. After hours of scanning, responding, and staying ready, your nervous system does not always know when the shift is over. Waking up in the middle of the night is not a failure. It is your system doing what it was trained to do.

The body may still be holding tension. The mind may still be waiting for something to happen. That is normal for anyone who works in high-alert environments. The goal right now is not to force sleep. It is simply to help your system recognize that the threat has passed and it is safe to rest.

 You are not broken. Your system is just still on duty. This worksheet will help you stand it down.

Do Not Chase Sleep

Do not force sleep. Lower the pressure instead, so sleep has room to return on its own.

What NOT to Do

- Stare at the ceiling
- Check the clock
- Calculate hours
- Scroll your phone

What TO Do Instead

- Lower pressure
- Focus on rest
- Work through the worksheet
- Let the body lead

Calm the system first. Sleep follows calm. It does not follow effort.

Check What's Happening

Before you can reset, take a quiet honest look at what is actually going on right now. No judgment. Just noticing. Work through each question slowly and honestly.

Is my body tense?

Check your jaw, your shoulders, your hands, and your stomach. Tension often hides where we stopped paying attention.

Is my mind replaying something?

A call, a moment, a conversation. Notice if your brain is looping on something from earlier today or the last shift.

Am I worrying about tomorrow?

Upcoming shifts, decisions, responsibilities. Notice if your mind has jumped ahead to something that has not happened yet.

Am I checking the clock?

Watching time is a form of pressure. Every time you check, you remind yourself that you are not asleep. Turn the clock away if you can.

60-Second Body Reset

Work through each step slowly. You do not need to rush. This is not an exercise. It is a quiet invitation for your body to let go of what it has been holding.

01

Unclench your jaw

Let your teeth separate slightly. Let the muscles in your face soften. Most people carry more tension here than they realize.

03

Relax your hands

Open your palms. Let your fingers rest loose. Unclenched hands signal safety to the nervous system.

05

Longer exhale

Breathe out slowly for six counts or more. The longer exhale activates the calming part of your nervous system. This is the most important step.

02

Drop your shoulders

Let them fall away from your ears. Feel the weight of them release. Do not force them down. Just let go.

04

Slow inhale

Breathe in slowly through your nose for four counts. Fill your lungs without forcing. Let the breath come naturally.

06

Repeat quietly

Go through the cycle two or three more times. Each round, notice if anything has softened. Do not grade yourself. Just repeat.

Set the Thought Aside

If something is on your mind, you do not have to solve it right now. You only need to acknowledge it and set it down until morning. Use the prompt below.

The thought I am setting aside until morning is...

Write it down, say it quietly to yourself, or simply name it in your mind. Naming it gives you a little distance from it.

✔ I do not need to solve this at 3 a.m.

Whatever it is, it will still be there in the morning. And in the morning, you will have a rested mind, better judgment, and more tools to work with. Right now, your only job is to put it down.

Closing Reminder

Your only job right now is to lower the volume.

Rest can follow.

Body

Jaw soft. Shoulders down. Hands open. Breath slow.

Mind

The thought is set aside. Morning will handle it. Not now.

System

The shift is over. You are safe. It is okay to stand down.

📄 You showed up. You did the work. Now let the night hold you for a while.