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The Evening Reset Checklist — Prepare Tomorrow Without Overloading Tonight

A standalone, flexible evening checklist for choosing small preparations, realistic technology boundaries, sleep-friendly wind-down options and a backup plan without turning wellbeing into a performance measure.



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Chapter links and PDF bookmarks support navigation. Writing areas are for handwritten or separate notes, not interactive PDF forms.

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Prepare tomorrow without overloading tonight

A standalone, flexible checklist for busy SME teams

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Use this checklist your way

An evening reset is a small set of choices that may make tomorrow easier to start. It is not a test, a promise of better performance, or a treatment for sleep problems. Choose only what fits your circumstances. A short reset, a later reset, or no reset at all can be the right choice.

You do **not** need to wake earlier, create a perfect routine or complete every box. Protecting rest comes first. If tonight is difficult, use the **Difficult day or low capacity** options in Section 7.

Private by default: This is for your own use. Do not ask colleagues to disclose sleep, mood or health information, and do not use completed checklists to score, monitor or manage staff.

A simple choice

Tonight I will choose:

- ☐ **One thing** that removes a small obstacle tomorrow
- ☐ **Two or three things** that feel useful and manageable
- ☐ **The low-capacity version** and then stop
- ☐ **No reset tonight** — rest or another need comes first

My reason for choosing this (optional):

1. Start with capacity, not ambition

Before planning tomorrow, notice what is realistically available. This is a planning prompt, not a health or wellbeing measurement.

Right now, my capacity feels:

- ☐ **Limited:** I will choose one tiny preparation or none
- ☐ **Changeable:** I will make a short plan with a fallback
- ☐ **Available:** I may choose a few preparations, then finish
- ☐ **Unclear:** I will avoid adding demands and decide later

What might make a full reset unsuitable tonight?

- ☐ Caring, family or household responsibilities
- ☐ A shift, night work, early start or changing schedule
- ☐ Disability, pain, access needs or fatigue
- ☐ Shared accommodation or limited control over noise, light or space
- ☐ Travel, commuting, an urgent task or an emotionally difficult day
- ☐ I simply need to stop for tonight

Illustrative example: “I have ten minutes before helping with bedtime, so I will put tomorrow’s key item by the door and leave the rest.”

My smallest useful step:

2. Make one part of tomorrow easier

Choose a practical preparation that reduces searching or rushing. These are options, not requirements.

Environment and essentials

- ☐ Put essential items somewhere easy to find (for example, keys, access pass or charger)
- ☐ Choose clothing only if that would make tomorrow easier; keep options comfortable and suitable for the setting
- ☐ Set up a quiet, comfortable place for a morning task if one is available
- ☐ Prepare an accessible alternative (for example, items within reach, a seated option or a visual reminder)
- ☐ Leave the environment as it is because changing it would create more work

My choice:

Food and drink, without rules

If preparing something for tomorrow is useful, keep it ordinary and flexible. This checklist does not prescribe meals, portions, supplements or drinks. You can use what is affordable, culturally familiar, safe for your household and suitable for your needs.

- ☐ Put a non-perishable item where I will notice it
- ☐ Make a simple plan for accessing food or drink tomorrow
- ☐ Leave food preparation for tomorrow or another person
- ☐ Check any household, allergy or storage needs using the relevant product guidance
- ☐ Skip this section — it is optional

Illustrative example: “I will place my packed lunch in the fridge, without adding a new food rule.”

My note:

3. Choose tomorrow’s first workable step

Looking briefly at commitments can help you decide what needs attention first. It does not guarantee a calm day or remove uncertainty.

A. What is genuinely fixed?

- ☐ Start time or shift: _____
- ☐ Essential appointment or caring commitment: _____
- ☐ Travel, access or technology constraint: _____
- ☐ Nothing needs deciding tonight

B. Choose one starting action

Write an action that is visible and small enough to begin. It can be an ordinary work task, a personal task or a practical transition.

Tomorrow’s first workable step:

Where or when might it happen?

What could make it easier?

- ☐ I have left enough flexibility for delays, access needs and real life
- ☐ I have not turned this into a promise about productivity
- ☐ I can change or cancel it if circumstances change

C. If-then backup (optional)

Use one simple contingency rather than trying to plan the whole day.

If then I will

Illustrative example: "If the morning is interrupted, then I will write down the next visible step and revisit the task after my first fixed commitment."

4. Set a technology boundary that is realistic

Digital boundaries work differently in different homes, jobs and shifts. Choose an option you control, or identify a work-system change that needs someone else's help.

- ☐ Put a personal phone on silent or use a setting that limits interruptions
- ☐ Move a device out of reach if that is comfortable and safe
- ☐ Keep a device available because caring, safety, access or work duties require it
- ☐ Write down an urgent thought rather than reopening a work app
- ☐ Agree a work contact or handover boundary for tomorrow
- ☐ No change tonight

The NHS suggests a calm routine before bed and reducing screen use before sleep; it also recommends adapting the bedroom environment to what helps you, rather than following a fixed setting. [1]

My realistic boundary or alternative:

Who or what controls this boundary?

- ☐ Me
- ☐ My household or caring arrangement
- ☐ My employer, rota or team
- ☐ A shared system or technology setting
- ☐ I am not able to control it tonight

If the pressure comes from workload, availability expectations or unclear responsibility, a personal phone setting cannot solve the underlying issue. Note the work conversation or system change needed instead:

5. Wind down without forcing sleep

A calm, repeatable wind-down can be worth trying, but there is no perfect routine. The NHS suggests regular sleep and wake times where possible, relaxing activities, a comfortable environment and not forcing sleep. [1]

Choose one or leave the section blank:

- ☐ Read, listen to quiet audio or do another calm activity
- ☐ Dim or reduce screens if that is practical and helpful
- ☐ Prepare the room in a way that feels comfortable, dark, quiet or cool enough for me
- ☐ Do ordinary, gentle movement such as a comfortable stretch — stop if it is uncomfortable
- ☐ Sit, walk slowly or notice an ordinary sensory detail
- ☐ Talk with someone I trust if that is what I need
- ☐ Do something else that helps me transition: _____
- ☐ No wind-down activity tonight

Optional breath or attention pause

Only try this if it feels comfortable. There is no special count, depth or outcome to achieve. You can keep your eyes open, look around the room, listen to a sound or walk instead. Stop and choose another activity if attention to breathing feels uncomfortable or distressing.

For one or two minutes, you might:

1. Notice one sound, one point of contact with a chair or floor, or one object in view.
2. Let breathing happen normally without changing it.
3. When attention wanders, return to the chosen sound, contact point or object — or finish.

- ☐ I chose ordinary attention
- ☐ I chose walking or another non-breathing option
- ☐ I chose not to do this
- ☐ I stopped because it did not feel right

Mindfulness is optional general education, not a requirement or treatment. NHS guidance notes that it is not right for everyone and that some people may feel worse. [2]

6. If you are awake or the night changes

A difficult night is not a personal failure. Do not add alarms, preparation or earlier waking if they would reduce the rest you need.

- ☐ I will not force sleep
- ☐ If I am awake and uncomfortable, I may get up and choose a quiet activity, returning to bed when sleepy
- ☐ I will adapt tomorrow's plan rather than punish myself for a disrupted night
- ☐ I will ask for practical help where appropriate
- ☐ I will leave this checklist and rest now

For persistent, worrying or significantly disruptive sleep problems, use [NHS insomnia advice](#) or speak with a GP or other appropriate health professional. This checklist is not a diagnosis or treatment plan. [5]

7. Shared homes, caring and shift-work alternatives

A reset should fit real conditions, not assume a quiet private room or a standard daytime schedule.

Shared home or limited space

- ☐ Use a small item, note or phone setting rather than rearranging a room
- ☐ Choose a quiet activity that does not require silence or privacy
- ☐ Agree a household signal or practical handover if useful
- ☐ Keep safety, access and other people's needs ahead of a routine

Caring responsibilities

- ☐ Choose a preparation that can be interrupted
- ☐ Make the backup plan "nothing extra" if the evening changes
- ☐ Ask for a handover or practical help if available
- ☐ Treat rest and connection as valid priorities

Shift work or variable hours

- ☐ Use “before my sleep period” rather than “bedtime” as the prompt
- ☐ Keep only the preparation that fits this shift
- ☐ Do not force a standard clock-time routine
- ☐ Use local workplace, occupational health or clinical advice for role-specific concerns

Difficult day or low capacity

- ☐ Put one essential item where it is easy to find
- ☐ Write one sentence about tomorrow, or leave it unwritten
- ☐ Set no new target
- ☐ Choose rest, support or a practical conversation instead

The alternative that fits my situation:

8. Work–design check: what should not sit with one person?

Personal preparation cannot replace safe workload, clear roles, support, respectful relationships, control over work or well-managed change. HSE’s Management Standards identify demands, control, support, relationships, role and change as key work-design areas, and say employers have duties to assess and act on work-related stress. [3]

This private prompt is for identifying a work issue, not measuring anyone’s health.

- ☐ Demands: workload, work pattern or environment needs attention
- ☐ Control: I need more say over how or when work is done
- ☐ Support: I need resources, guidance or a supportive conversation
- ☐ Relationships: conflict or unacceptable behaviour needs addressing
- ☐ Role: responsibilities or priorities are unclear or conflicting
- ☐ Change: a change has not been explained or supported
- ☐ None of these, or I do not want to record it here

The work issue (no health details needed):

The safe next conversation or action:

Acas recommends a private, supportive conversation, open questions, listening, identifying causes and working together on possible solutions. It also describes action plans and possible adjustments such as prioritising workload, flexible hours, rest breaks, different responsibilities, training or mentoring. [4]

If you are a manager, do not ask for this completed checklist, sleep details, mood scores or medical information. Ask what work conditions could change, follow your organisation's policies, and involve appropriate support. If a worker is disabled, reasonable-adjustment duties may apply; seek appropriate HR or specialist advice rather than guessing.

9. Final decision and action plan

Choose the smallest honest plan. A blank box is a valid result.

Tonight

- ☐ I am doing one preparation: _____
- ☐ I am doing two or three preparations: _____
- ☐ I am using the low-capacity option: _____
- ☐ I am stopping now and protecting rest

Stop point (time, event or feeling):

Tomorrow

One thing I will try, if it still fits:

My fallback if it does not fit:

Who or what may need to help?

Review date or moment (optional):

- ☐ This plan is optional and changeable
 - ☐ It does not ask me to disclose health information
 - ☐ It does not replace a work-design conversation or professional support
 - ☐ I have not added a supplement, medication, diet or treatment instruction
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References

- [1] [NHS Every Mind Matters, “How to fall asleep faster and sleep better”](#) — regular sleep routine, calm wind-down, practical room adjustments, not forcing sleep and NHS insomnia signposting.
- [2] [NHS, “Mindfulness”](#) — present-moment attention, optional everyday practices, and the qualification that mindfulness is not right for everyone.
- [3] [HSE, “What are the Management Standards?”](#) — demands, control, support, relationships, role and change; employer risk-assessment and action responsibilities.
- [4] [Acas, “Supporting workers – Managing work-related stress”](#) — private supportive conversations, action plans, confidentiality and workplace adjustments.
- [5] [NHS, “Insomnia”](#) — further NHS information for persistent or worrying sleep problems.

Educational notice: This checklist offers general, non-clinical education and optional planning prompts. It is not medical advice, diagnosis, therapy, treatment, a sleep assessment or a substitute for professional or workplace support. Use only the options that are suitable for you, and stop any activity that feels uncomfortable or distressing.