

# HOPE 2 SLEEP

## Charity for Sleep Apnoea



## New to CPAP or a Ventilator? Desensitisation Tips

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When first told you need to use a mask for sleeping it can be a shock, but rest assured that most people feel like this at first, so helping your body acclimatise gradually can aid with long-term success to stop sleep disordered breathing and low oxygen further damaging your health. Another benefit is feeling more energised during the day!

There are many people who suffer from claustrophobia for various reasons, who eventually manage to overcome their fear of wearing the mask, once they realise that the mask is their 'friend' and will ensure that they sleep safely by continuing to breathe during sleep, when it's not possible to control our own breathing. In fact, the reality is that it's more claustrophobic to sleep without the mask and allow our bodies to fight to breathe during the night!

As well as asking for support and advice from other mask users via Facebook groups, Forums etc., the following steps will help if you feel unable to tolerate CPAP:-

- Practise wearing the CPAP mask during the day (without connecting it to the machine) at home whilst awake for as long as you can tolerate it. Remember, **you** are in control, and have the option to remove the mask as often as you need to.
- When you feel comfortable with the mask, attach it to the CPAP or ventilator and switch the machine on. Practice breathing through the mask whilst watching tv, listening to music or reading etc. Embrace the air coming through the mask rather than fighting it. Remember, this is going to become your friend and protector.
- Try taking daytime naps with the CPAP or ventilator, but not too long to cause problems for sleeping at night, as a tired comfortable person will always sleep better.
- Use CPAP or ventilator during the night for as long as you feel you can. Take a break if necessary and if possible try again. **Do not feel a failure** if you have to give up during the night as you will find that as you take 2 steps forward, even if followed, sometimes by 1 step backwards, you are progressing and getting nearer to the ultimate goal. Give yourself a challenge by trying to beat the previous night's record of usage hours.
- If by now you haven't automatically managed a full night on your CPAP and you feel ready, tell yourself "tonight my friend stays with me all night" and think too of some positive statements such as one of my favourites from Susan Jeffers.... "***Feel The Fear and Do It Anyway***" or even Christopher Robin to Winnie The Pooh... "***Promise me you'll always remember you're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.***" Any positive words that mean a lot to you will help.

Hand on heart, I promise you we have come across literally 100's of people who never 'dreamed' they would ever manage to sleep with a mask on, and yet now most of these people would never consider sleeping without it!

Always remember:-

**"Winners Are Not People Who Never Fail, but People Who Never Quit"** (Edwin Cole).

Many insurance companies for those in the USA, the DVLA and other organisations state people should use CPAP for a minimum of 4 hours. Please bear in mind that **every time** a person sleeps with no therapy, they will still experience apnoeas and hypopnoeas so they will be at risk of the consequences of sleep disordered breathing when not on therapy, whether it be day or night! Therefore, the ultimate aim is to wear the mask for **ALL** sleeps!



Sometimes, people need help and tips for discomfort issues, and this can be both in the way of affordable comfort accessories or simply tips from other mask users, so consider joining the online support groups which you can find on our website and in the shop. If you aren't online give us a call on **0300 102 9711**. Bear in mind that any problems you may be experiencing will not be unique to you and can usually be sorted out with the correct support and advice.

**(You are very welcome to download, share and print this document to help you).**

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