Caffeine, alcohol, nicotine and sleep

How caffeine, alcohol and nicotine affect sleep, and what to change.

Caffeine
Blocks the chemical that builds sleep pressure. Half of it can still be in your system five or six hours later, longer for some people.

Alcohol
Helps you nod off, then breaks up the second half of the night. Sleep is lighter, with more waking and early rising.

Nicotine
A stimulant. It makes it harder to fall asleep and causes lighter sleep. Withdrawal overnight can wake you.

Caffeine

- It is in coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks, chocolate and some painkillers.
- Try a cut-off in the early afternoon, and notice the effect over a week or two.
- If you drink a lot, cut down gradually to avoid headaches.
- Extra coffee after a bad night feels essential, and sets up the next bad night.

Alcohol

- A nightcap is one of the most common causes of 3am waking.
- If you drink, have it earlier in the evening and keep it modest.
- If you have been drinking heavily every day, do not stop suddenly. Talk to your GP first, because withdrawal can be dangerous.

Nicotine

- Avoid smoking or vaping in the hour or two before bed and during the night.
- If you are thinking of stopping, your GP or pharmacist can help, and sleep usually improves after the first few weeks.

Over the next week	What I do now	What I will try
Caffeine		
Alcohol		
Nicotine		

What I notice after a week

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