

## Nutritional issues:

Caffeine is a stimulant, which functions to keep us alert and reduce fatigue. It is found in coffee, tea, cola, various medications, and some foods. The stimulant effect from caffeine can last in the body for six or more hours and can disrupt sleep.

To prevent this:

- Avoid caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea and cola for 6 hours before bedtime.
- Gradually reduce your intake of caffeine by substituting caffeinated with decaffeinated tea and coffee.

## Sleep Environment:

Many factors affect your sleep environment such as noise, temperature, light, and your sleeping surface.

- Block out irritating noises by using ear plugs, or using “white noise” such as a fan or relaxing music.
- A comfortable room temperature varies from person to person. Generally, a cooler room promotes a more restful sleep.
- Darken your bedroom using light-blocking curtains or an eye mask.
- Choose a mattress and pillow carefully; spend time making sure it fits you best (soft, firm, thick or thin).

## Resources

- National Sleep Foundation  
<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/>
- American Academy of Sleep Medicine  
<http://www.aasmnet.org/>
- American Insomnia Association  
<http://www.americaninsomniaassociation.org/>
- Sleep Research Society  
<http://www.sleepresearchsociety.org/>
- NIH National Center for Sleep Disorders Research  
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/sleep>

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# Chronic Pain and Sleep

## Sleep is Important

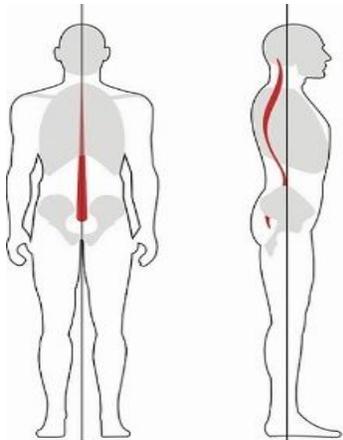
Sleep is essential for your health and wellbeing. Sleep allows your body to recover from the day's activities and restores what your body has lost.

Unfortunately, many people experiencing chronic pain have sleep problems. Disrupted sleep can leave you feeling run down and can worsen your pain symptoms.

By making changes in your sleep position, sleep routines, your nutrition, and your sleep environment, you can help restore your natural sleep cycle.

## Sleep Mechanics

When standing, your body is stacked like a set of blocks. To get into the best supported position when lying, you need to think of your good standing position and fill in the spaces between your body and the bed.



## Sleep Positions

### Lying on your side

When lying on your side, keep your knees slightly bent and place a pillow between your knees to keep them at the same width as your hips. Place a rolled towel in the space between your ribs and your hips, and hug a pillow to support your arms. Place a pillow under your head just high enough to keep your head in line with your spine. Fill in the space between your head and your neck with a rolled towel.



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### Lying on your Back

When lying on your back you need to support the space under your knees with a pillow(s) or cushion, and the space behind your low back with a rolled towel.

To prevent over stretching your neck, put a pillow under your head high enough to allow your neck to relax. You may need to fill in the space behind your neck with a small rolled towel.

## Sleep Routines

- Allow yourself a “**transition period**” before going to sleep. Prepare for bed and then take a 30 minute relaxation period. You may want to use heat or ice to help settle your pain prior to getting in bed.
- Go to bed only when drowsy and ready to sleep.
- Get up at the same time every morning.
- Avoid sleeping in, even though you may have had a poor sleep the night before.
- Avoid sleeping during the daytime; however, if you have excessive fatigue, taking a 30-40 minute nap before 1 PM in the day may be beneficial.
- Reserve your bedroom for sleep; avoid reading, eating, watching TV and/or using a computer while in bed.
- Address worries during the day, not at night; seek professional help if necessary.
- Limit fluids after 7 PM.
- Become involved in some type of physical activity during the day.
- Never use heat or ice in bed.