

Sleeping Positions for Aches and Pains

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If you've ever lost a wink of sleep because your legs feel restless or your back is a bother, the problem may stem from your sleeping position. It's easier said than done to change the way that we sleep, especially after we've habitually done so for several years, but it doesn't hurt to try. If you suffer from sciatica, degenerative disc disease, or mild to moderate back pain, and you've exhausted your pain management options, allow us to encourage you to reevaluate your posture during sleep so that you can improve your quality of rest.

Is My Mattress the Problem?

Though we don't want you purchasing a new mattress with the primary reason for eliminating or reducing your pain, it's good to ask yourself some questions about the current mattress that you have. If you believe that a firm mattress will solve your orthopedic issues, this is actually incorrect. Recent studies have shown that people who sleep on extremely firm (rock solid) mattresses have a poorer sleep quality than people who sleep on firm or medium-firm mattresses. If you haven't invested in a firm or medium-firm mattress that is made with good-quality innerspring, or memory foam, you can enhance your mattress by adding a mattress topper.

Changing the Way You Fall Asleep

Have you noticed that you don't wake up in the same position that you fell asleep? This is because some of us change positions throughout sleep, while others have a favorite way to fall asleep. Changing your sleeping pattern may require persistence, but it's doable, and it's something you'll get used to over time.

Best Positions for Alleviating Pain

- **Sleeping on your side with a pillow between your legs** – To lessen pain in the hips and pelvis and keep the spine in alignment, allow your right (or left) shoulder to make contact with the mattress, along with the rest of that side of your body and place a pillow between your knees.
- **Sleeping on your side in the fetal position** – If you suffer from a herniated disc, herniation happens when part of the disc is pushed out of its normal position, causing weakness. By curling up in a fetal position, you create space between these vertebrae, reducing nerve pain that the disc has caused.
- **Sleeping on your stomach with a pillow under the abdomen** – People who are diagnosed with degenerative disc disease may benefit from stomach sleeping as long as a pillow is in place under the abdomen. Because sleeping on your stomach can cause neck pain, place a pillow under the pelvis to alleviate pressure on the lower back. Depending on your level of comfort, place a pillow under your head for neck support.

- **Sleeping on your back with a pillow between the knees** – In this position, the weight of the body is evenly distributed. This allows for better alignment of the spine. For back pain, lay flat on your back and place a pillow underneath the knees for added support.

Because most of these sleeping positions involve pillows, it's important that you do the research to find the one that meets your needs. Back and stomach sleepers may benefit from thin pillows or memory foam pillows that have extra padding to support the neck, while side sleepers may find more comfort in a body pillow that helps align the rest of the body. To get the most out of the pillow that you settle on, be sure to change it every 18 months or when you notice it is no longer comfortable.