

Are you getting enough sleep?

The importance of being idle

Every day you shrink a little...did you know that you aren't as tall at the end of the day as you are at the beginning? This is because during the day fluid in the discs of the spine gets compressed out due to weight bearing against gravity. This is a natural phenomenon which naturally reverses after a good night's sleep.

Good sleep is essential as it is when the body has the opportunity to rest, recover, regenerate and repair from the demands we put on it daily. If you suffer with low back or neck pain a good night's sleep can be a problem. Finding the right mattress and then a comfortable position to sleep in are common dilemmas faced by back pain sufferers.

Sleeping on an unsupportive mattress can maintain or even cause back pain by affecting the natural alignment of the spine and since a third of our lives is spent sleeping it is important to choose the right one.

Does your bed or mattress need replacing?

Is it more than 8-10 years old?

Does it dip in the middle?

Do you sleep better in other beds?

Are you sleeping less well than a year ago?

Do you wake up with aches and pains?

Choosing a mattress

Take time in selecting the right one.

If the bed is for two, you need to shop together.

Lie on each bed for at least 10 minutes trying out different sleeping positions.

Choose for comfort and support. Too soft and your body will slouch, too firm and you will feel pressure points. Generally the heavier you are the firmer the mattress you will need.

Partners of widely differing weights might prefer a bed composed of 2 single mattresses zipped together.

Try out pocket sprung and foam, including memory foam.

Mattresses are heavy so if you are going to have difficulty turning it regularly then opt for a non-turn one.

Ensure your bed is the right height for you to get in and out of.

The mattress you choose must be suitable for your particular bed base. A new mattress should not go on a base that is old or sags in the middle.

Tips on comfortable sleeping positions

Make sure that your pillow supports your neck so that your neck and spine are in line while you sleep. Too many or too few pillows can cause neck strain. Contoured pillows may help.



Avoid lying on your front with a pillow under your head as this can stress the neck and exaggerate the curve of the lower back. If you do sleep on your front a pillow placed under your abdomen may help.



If you have trouble sleeping, try lying on your back with one pillow under your head and one under your knees, or sleep on your side with your knees bent and a pillow between your knees to reduce lower back stiffness and pressure on the lumbar spine.

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Sleep