

SAVVY SLEEPING



Lie down and be comfortable. Think about how you fall asleep. Some people are curled up in a ball and others sprawled out all over the bed. How do you feel when you get up, refreshed and ready to go or like you have been in a fight?

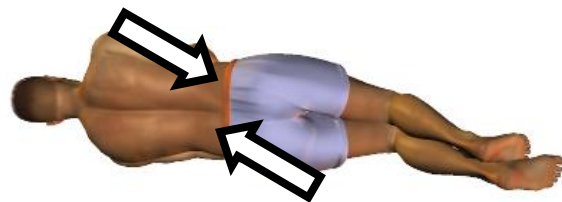
The easy answer to poor sleep is that your mattress is too hard to soft or just worn out. Before we blame the mattress, futon or waterbed, let's examine the position you sleep in.

When you lie down, your muscles should be relaxed. This makes sense. However, the position that you lie in can stop many of your muscles from relaxing evenly. This results in constant pulling on your spine while you are recumbent. When you get up, these muscles are sore because they have worked all night.

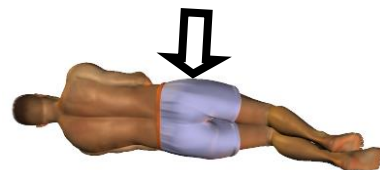
Let's start with you lying on your side. The first important position is the angle of your legs. The more problems you have with your pelvis and lower back, the more specific the angle of your legs should be at is vital. In other words, the



healthier you are the greater the angle you can keep your legs at. If you rub the muscles on both sides of the lower back, these should be soft. If they are tender or contracted, raise or lower your legs to find the position where these muscles are relaxed. This is especially important if you have any low back problem. Sleeping for hours with these muscles contracted just aggravates the local injury severely retarding the healing process.



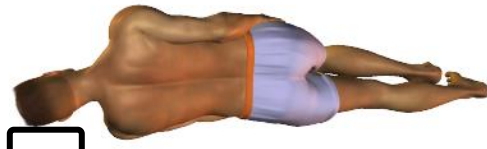
Rub the muscle on the outside of your pelvis. If this is sore, place a pillow between your legs. The correct height will dramatically reduce the tenderness over this muscle.



If you lie on your back when you fall asleep, have someone reach in under your back and rub the muscles beside the spine. If these are tender, place a small pillow under the knees and see if this reduces the tenderness. This is more common in people who are sleeping on extremely hard mattresses.

The next thing to check is the height of your pillow. The function of the pillow is to support your neck and head. The height depends on whether you sleep on your back or on your side. On your side, the pillow has to fill the space from the tip of your shoulder to your neck.

Lie on your side with your pillow under your neck. Reach up and rub the muscles on the front and side of your neck. If these are tender, your pillow needs to be altered. It is just as bad to be too high or too low. If you view the spine from the side, the neck should be supported in a direct line with the back. The head should not angle down or up. Find a pillow or combination of pillows that supports your neck so that there is little to no tenderness in the neck muscles.



If you lie on your back to sleep, you will need less support than when you are on your side. If you have your pillow height elevated above the optimum, you will have increased contractions in these same neck muscles.

Now you have the optimum position for you to fall asleep in. If you wake in the night in another position, just roll back into this ideal position for you.



You should practice getting into the correct position with someone rubbing the muscles to ensure that you have attained the optimum sleep position for yourself.

If you can't find a correct position on your bed, try another bed. If your mattress is too soft, worn out or too hard, you will find it difficult to find a relaxed position for your spine.

If you have any problems checking these positions, please ask us about them. Bring in your pillow(s) if you want us to check your sleep posture.

What's Causing That Headache?

We all get headaches from time to time, but figuring out why we're suffering or how to get rid of them isn't always easy. Millions of Americans take daily or near-daily doses of pain relief medications to combat headaches, often providing only temporary relief and causing a variety of unpleasant side effects.

A number of clinical studies note the effectiveness of chiropractic manipulation in relieving headache symptoms, an observation confirmed by a recent literature review that provided evidence of a potential spinal cord connection. Specifically, the author's search of previous research revealed that dysfunction in the upper part of the cervical spine has the potential to create cranial pain or headaches.

Evidence points to a variety of possible causes of headache pain, including stress, muscle tension, nutritional deficiencies, and hormonal imbalances, but most headache sufferers turn to over-the-counter drugs as their only form of relief. You don't have to be one of the millions dependent on pain medications. If you suffer from headaches, schedule a comprehensive evaluation. If neck, TMJ or spine dysfunction is causing your pain, treatment aimed at normalizing these structures may well bring them under control just as it has with many other patients.