



PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

(Patient Education- Part 5- Patient Handout)

MANAGING SLEEP – SOME TIPS TO IMPROVE SLEEP HABITS

If you have persisting pain, you may NOT be sleeping well.

Here are some simple things to try and improve your sleep habits.

1. Think about changing your pillow

- A good supporting pillow is essential for sleeping well. Consider a memory foam pillow or a contoured feather pillow to support your head and neck in a neutral position.

2. Is your bed good enough?

- Your bed should be supporting, with enough softness on top to allow for your contours.
- Some people require an adjustable bed (ask your physio about this, as we can give you the name of a supplier of adjustable beds.)

3. Sleep environment:

- Make your bedroom a comfortable and relaxing environment.
- Don't do 'work' in bed especially on a device or laptop.
- Avoid having a television in the bedroom, especially at night.
- Ensure the temperature of the room is optimal.
- Ensure the room is dark enough and has good air flow and is quiet from outside noise.
- If you share a bed, make sure your partner is aligned well with your needs for rest and relaxation and does not disturb you while you sleep.

4. Don't drink coffee or caffeinated drinks

for several hours before bed (everyone reacts differently to this - so get to know how caffeine reacts to your body).

5. Limit alcohol

- This may help you go to sleep, but it will not let you sleep deeply or keep you asleep. This will affect your sleeping patterns.

6. Limit fluid intake late in the day

and evening as this may disturb your sleep, by you needing to go to the toilet (ensure you hydrate well earlier in the day as being dehydrated will also lead to poor sleep pattern).

7. Use 'support' to position your body

- Try a pillow under knees if on back or under top leg if on side.
- Try and position body in a neutral position, relax neck and shoulder tension, relax arms and hands, and try not to be too curled up.

8. Limit screen time (Blue light)

- Moderate device and computer usage before bedtime as this will 'wake up' the brain.

9. Avoid working late into the evening

- And using your brain with complex thinking, putting your brain under stress. Your brain needs time to shut off and shut down before it is ready to sleep, and this will allow the stress of work to be 'relaxed'.



10. Get enough exercise in the day

- Exercise is important for brain and body function and will help you become tired in the evening and need rest. (Exercise helps to regulate brain chemicals which promote sleep)
- Don't exercise vigorously before bedtime- this will wake up your brain.

11. Use Breathing and the Chillout Zone to try and relax

- You need to turn down your overactive brain if you are under stress or suffer from anxiety. To do this - use Breathing (see Chillout Zone) and visual imagery to help you relax, get oxygen to your brain and help to change the mix of chemicals in your brain from stress type pain enhancing neuro-chemicals to relaxation and pain reducing neuro-chemicals.

12. Your Amygdala

plays an important role in sleep and reduced sleep will lead to increased stress levels, anxiety and more pain.

Remember the Amygdala is the fight and flight section of your 'emotional brain' and when activated keeps you in an anxious state and will inhibit sleep. 'Relax your Amygdala', with the Chillout Zone and Breathing to help you sleep.

13. Getting angry

about your pain and not sleeping- **STOPS** you sleeping and gets you into a cycle of poor sleep break this cycle with Chillout Zone, Breathing and Relaxation and calm down the Amygdala. This is Brain Plasticity in ACTION.

14. Talk to your GP

about medication and melatonin and keep talking to your GP if the plan is not working they may refer you to a clinical psychologist.

