

## SLEEP

When living with chronic pain, it can be challenging to get a good night's sleep. It can be difficult to fall asleep all together and, even when do you do fall asleep, you can be disrupted with multiple awakenings throughout the night. Furthermore, even if you do get a good amount of sleep, your sleep quality can be poor and you may still feel very tired in the morning. The good news is, since pain and sleep are connected, working on your quality of sleep can have positive impacts on your pain. Here are some practical tips that can help with managing sleep:

### ESTABLISH A ROUTINE

- Get up at the same time each morning, regardless of the quality or amount of sleep you got the night before.
- Similarly, go to bed at roughly the same time each night.

### MAKE THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN “BED” AND “SLEEP” STRONG

- Your bed should only be used for sleeping and sex. Refrain from reading books, watching TV, or resting in bed. Find somewhere other than the bedroom to rest during the day.
- This also means not allowing yourself to toss and turn in bed feeling frustrated about being awake.
  - If more than 20 minutes have passed and you have not fallen asleep, get out of bed and try a quiet, non-stimulating activity until you feel sleepy and can try again.

### TRY RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Relaxation techniques are particularly helpful when you are worried about not being able to sleep or about your pain. Specifically:

- Use relaxation techniques before getting in bed to sleep.
- Use guided free body scans and progressive muscle relaxation meditations available on the internet.
- Practice slow, deep breathing into your diaphragm.
- Use guided imagery (e.g., picturing yourself in peaceful environment).
- Take a bubble bath or hot shower.

## ESTABLISH GOOD SLEEP HYGIENE

Good sleep hygiene includes managing different activities you do during the day that can affect sleep.

These include:

- Diet
- Exercise
- Light
- Temperature
- Keeping a sleep diary

## MOOD, ANXIETY AND SLEEP

- Depression can cause you to wake up earlier than you would like and prevent you from falling back asleep. Often it is associated with a racing heart and thoughts that won't switch off.
- With anxiety, it can be difficult to fall asleep initially due to racing thoughts that are hard to switch off.
- Getting treatment for depression and anxiety is likely to have a positive impact on your sleep, mood, and overall pain.

## MEDICATIONS AND SLEEP

- Certain medications can help with improving sleep but are not always recommended as a stand-alone treatment.
- Sleep problems associated with pain are not often short-term problems. However, some medications can be useful for short-term use to help reset your sleep habits and to break problematic cycles such as napping. Speak to your family physician if you think you would benefit from medication to help manage sleep.

## RESOURCES

- <https://www.liveplanbc.ca/pain-education/sleep-rest>
- <https://painhealth.csse.uwa.edu.au/pain-module/sleep-and-pain/>
- <https://www.liveplanbc.ca/pain-education/sleep-rest/sleep-hygiene>
- <https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/overcoming-fatigue/a-good-night-s-sleep>