

Pain and Sleep

People with chronic pain often report problems with getting to sleep, staying asleep or both. Thinking too much and worry can also add to sleep problems. The following ideas can help you develop better sleeping habits to manage your sleep problems.

Top Tips for sleeping:

- Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day *regardless* of how well you slept, even on weekends
- Make a good bedtime routine eg) shower, brush teeth, wash face
- Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows
- Make sure your bedroom is not too hot or cold
- Ensure you are comfortable and your bedroom is quiet and dark
- Don't use your bed for anything but sleeping eg) No TV or computer games, eating, work, watching television or discuss problems in bed
- Learn to reduce thinking and worrying in bed eg) relax your mind
- Only lie down to go to sleep when you are sleepy
- Relax for 30 minutes before going to bed (e.g. have a warm bath)
- Avoid naps during the day. If you do nap, keep it to 20 minutes and before 3pm, this includes 5 minutes nodding off in front of the TV
- Do some form of physical relaxation every day, but not too late in day
- Avoid heavy meals, exercise or working on the computer late in the evening
- Don't stay in bed if you are awake for more than 20 minutes — go to another room and do something relaxing. If you aren't asleep in 20-30 minutes, get up again and do something
- Be as active as possible during the day and spend some time outdoors
- Reduce or avoid the amount of caffeinated drinks eg tea, coffee, chocolate, Coca Cola and energy/sports drinks each day and especially after lunchtime
- Avoid smoking and drinking alcohol in the evening

Reference: National Prescribing Service, Good sleep habits (2014), NPS Medicinewise, Australia (Sourced 24/2/2014, <http://www.nps.org.au/publications/consumer/medicines-talk/2013/medicinesstalk-no.-44-february-2013/good-sleep-habits>)