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Physiotherapy Tips For A More Comfortable Sleep

For most of us, the hours we spend sleeping are simply a time for rest and recovery. However, you might be surprised to learn that your sleeping position can have a significant impact on your body, particularly if you already have an injury. When you consider that we spend up to 40% of our lives in bed, it becomes less surprising.

Ideally, your body should be held in a position of minimal stress while sleeping. This means that all your joints and muscles are resting in a neutral position. Over time, joints that are held in more extreme positions may put pressure on the surrounding structures, and this may lead to a feeling of stiffness in the morning.

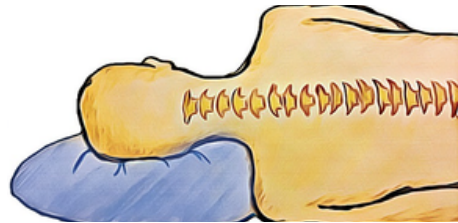
Back Pain

For people with back pain, finding a comfortable position at night can be difficult. Ideally, the natural curves of the spine should be maintained and supported throughout the night. The correct mattress will support your lower back without making you feel as though you have been sleeping on concrete all night. A mattress that is too soft might feel comfortable to begin with, but over time it will let you sink too much, meaning the curve of the lower spine may be lost. Waking up with a stiff spine could be a sign that you are using the wrong mattress.

For many people, sleeping on their side keeps their spine in a more natural alignment than on their back. If you sleep on your back, placing a pillow under your knees can help to maintain your lumbar spinal curve throughout the night.

Neck Pain

While you may be attached to your pillow, it could be the cause of unnecessary neck pain for you. The neck is often the most vulnerable part of our body when our sleeping setup is not ideal. Side sleepers may let their neck fall excessively to the side with a pillow that is too low, or have



their neck elevated too much with pillows that are too high.

The importance of having a supportive pillow that properly supports your neck while sleeping cannot be overstated. If you find yourself putting your arm under your pillow while you sleep, it is likely that your pillow is too low. Having your shoulder in this position overnight can put unnecessary stress on the structures in the shoulder joint and should be avoided if possible.

Sleeping on your stomach with your head turned to the side can be the cause of many issues, and if this is your preferred sleeping position, it could be worth chatting to your physiotherapist about strategies to improve your sleeping posture.

Hip Pain

Side sleepers often spend their nights with one leg crossed over their body. This can place extra pressure on the structures on the side of the hip, such as tendons and bursae, and can impact the health of these tissues, as compression can reduce blood flow to the area. If the mattress is too firm, then the hip on the underside of the body may also be compressed under your bodyweight.

Placing a pillow under your knee while sleeping on your side can help to maintain a neutral alignment of your hip. This can also help to keep your lower back in a more neutral position during the night.

Speak to your physiotherapist for more advice and find out if your sleeping setup is right for you.



Brain Teasers

1. What can be driven although it doesn't have wheels, sliced but stays whole?
2. You do not want to have it, but when you do have it, you do not want to lose it. What is it?

PHYSIOFACT.

MOST OF THE HEAT IN YOUR BODY IS CREATED BY MUSCLE CONTRACTION. SHIVERING IS YOUR BODY TRYING TO WARM ITSELF.

Thoracic Outlet Syndrome

What is Thoracic Outlet Syndrome?

The thoracic outlet is a small opening between the neck and shoulder that allows a variety of nerves and blood vessels to pass safely from the neck to supply the arm, chest, and shoulder blade. As this can be quite a small space, any narrowing can cause these structures to become compressed and irritated. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as thoracic outlet syndrome. This space can become compromised through trauma to the neck, overuse or repetitive stress to the arm, or the presence of an extra rib in the neck.

What are the signs and symptoms of Thoracic Outlet Syndrome?

Signs and symptoms of thoracic outlet syndrome may depend on whether nervous tissue or blood vessels are involved. In most cases, symptoms are caused by compression of nerve tissue rather than compression of veins or arteries.

When neural tissue compression is the cause of thoracic outlet syndrome, reported symptoms may include pins and needles, tingling, or numbness in the affected arm. Other symptoms include pain and weakness or tiredness in the arm that increases with overhead work. Some people may experience neck pain or headaches at the base of their head.

If a vein is affected, there may be swelling and discolouration of the affected arm, as well as pain. When an artery is affected, cramping in the arm or hand during use may occur. Due to decreased blood flow, the arm or hand may feel cold and may even change colour.

Who is usually affected?

Thoracic outlet syndrome is more common in people who work with their arms in an above-shoulder position. For example, a teacher who writes frequently on a chalkboard, a construction worker hammering nails overhead, or a hairdresser.

How can physiotherapy help?

Your physiotherapist will assess a range of factors, including your posture, the flexibility



of your spine, and the length of your neck muscles. It is also important to assess how you move your neck, back, and arms.

Depending on the findings of the physical assessment, your physiotherapist may help you stretch appropriate muscles, modify movement patterns, and improve posture. This may involve manual therapy techniques such as joint mobilisations, strapping techniques, and soft tissue massage.

Treatment time may vary depending on symptom presentation and response. Thoracic outlet syndrome can take anywhere from a few treatments to several weeks to improve, along with continuation of a home exercise programme.

None of the information in this newsletter replaces proper medical advice. Always consult a medical professional for advice about your individual condition.

Answers: 1. A golf ball. 2. A lawsuit

Quinoa & Mushroom Stuffed Capsicums

Ingredients

- 4 Red and Yellow Capsicums
- 1 cup of cooked Quinoa
- 1 small Onion, diced
- 300gm Mushrooms, diced
- 1 cup fresh Spinach, chopped
- 2 cups of water
- 2 cloves of Garlic, Crushed
- Chilli Powder, Cumin & Paprika
- ¼ cup fresh Cilantro/Coriander
- 2 Tbsp. Olive Oil
- Salt & Pepper



1. Preheat your oven to 200°C, prepare a baking tray with baking paper or brush a thin layer of olive oil over the bottom.
2. Sauté oil over medium heat in a large frying pan. Add onions, garlic, chilli, cumin and paprika, salt and pepper and cook until onion and garlic begin to soften.
3. Add mushrooms to the pan and cook for a few more minutes, stirring occasionally until mushrooms begin to brown slightly. Finally, add cooked quinoa and chopped spinach leaves and stir in other ingredients.
4. Slice capsicums lengthwise, into halves, removing seeds and stems. Fill with quinoa mixture. Set capsicums on the baking tray and cook for 25 minutes.

Garnish with fresh coriander, lime and cracked black pepper.

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