



Physiotherapists:  
The Body Specialists

# Physio Tips

**SLEEP**

Physiotherapy Association of BC

## IMPROVING YOUR SLEEP

Any Physiotherapist will tell you that proper sleep is essential to good health. Since much of our tissue healing occurs when we are in the phases of sleep, you can enhance your recovery by ensuring that you get enough rest. Your Physiotherapist can provide helpful suggestions to manage pain and improve your comfort level to make the most of your “down” time.

A proper amount of restful sleep will:

- Replenish energy needed for physical activity (i.e. daily activities, exercise);
- Increase pain-relieving endorphins which can reduce the need for medication;
- Increase ability to cope with stress;
- Improve mood;
- Improve learning and thinking (i.e. attention, concentration, memory),
- Improve repair and regenerate of body tissues.

The goal is to get sufficient sleep to feel refreshed the following day. This is typically 6 – 8 hours, but may be more or less for you.

### TIPS to help you sleep:

- Avoid napping during the day; it will make it harder to sleep at night.
- Put yourself on a normal sleep schedule with a regular bedtime, and get up about the same time each morning.
- Develop a bed-time ritual. Stick with it and your body will learn when it is time to move from awake to drowsy to sleep.
- Learn a relaxation technique, and perform it before you go to sleep as part of your ritual. Try counting down, forty long calm inhales and exhales. If you cannot relax, you will not be able to sleep!
- Get comfortable. Have a hot bath/shower before bed
- Reserve your bed for sleep and sex. If you do too many “awake” things in bed, your mind will associate bed with awake time.
- Exercise during the day, every day. People find it difficult to sleep if they exercise just before bed.

- Avoid agitating activities like watching the news prior to bed.
- Avoid large meals and stimulants (tea, coffee, pop) before bed.
- Write down nagging thoughts so they don't keep you awake.
- Resolve conflict or avoid stressful activities before bed.
- Avoid caffeine intake, especially in the afternoon and evening.
- Do not take sleeping pills except under a doctor's guidance.
- Work with your physiotherapist to develop the right exercise program and relaxation techniques for you.

For more information about sleeping positions, proper pillows and mattresses for your condition, and other symptom self-management strategies, consult your Physiotherapist.

Physiotherapists are experts in movement and mobility, body mechanics, muscles and joints. They will help develop an exercise program specially-tailored to your needs, putting together the right combination of activities to improve physical fitness and avoid injury.

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