# 7 Tips for Sleeping With Back Pain

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## Ways to Make Sleeping With Back Pain Easier

Sleeping with back pain can be difficult. Many people toss and turn, trying to get comfortable. Using a specific pillowcase, like Cariloha bamboo and Silvon organic pillowcases can help you get cozy and fall asleep faster. Being comfortable while sleeping is important to get a good night's rest. In this article, we're looking at seven tips to help you sleep with back pain.

### Back Pain by the Numbers

As it turns out, I am not alone in my back pain woes!

Upwards of 31 million Americans suffer from low-back pain and low-back pain is the leading cause of disability, according to the Global Burden of Disease 2010. It is also the most common reason to miss work, and it is the second most common reason to head to your physician’s office – coming up next only to upper respiratory infections.

Back pain is costly – Americans spend an estimated $50 billion – yes, billion, annually on healthcare costs associated with back pain.

### Tips to Make Sleeping With Back Pain Easier

#### 1. For Acute Back Pain

…speak with your doctor. Immediately following any injury, you should be under the care of a physician.

These are little tips for how to sleep with back pain that has worked for me in the years following my back injuries when the pain became chronic. While these may work in the acute phase, please do not utilize these tips on how to sleep with back pain without speaking to your physician first.

#### 2. Modify Your Sleeping Position

Back sleeper, belly sleeper, side sleeper? Well, there are ways to modify how you are sleeping, while still sleeping how you like to!

If you like to sleep on your side, you have got a couple of options.

First, ensure that you have an extra pillow or two. Place one pillow under our head. Next, roll over onto your desired side and allow your shoulder to make contact with the mattress. Grab that extra pillow and place it between your knees. If you note a gap between your waist and the mattress, a small pillow or a rolled-up blanket or towel can be placed between your waist and the mattress. This position keeps your hips, pelvis and spine in

alignment – but make sure to switch to the other side the following night!

Another option is to sleep on your side in a fetal position. Begin by lying on your back, then roll onto the desired side. Bring your knees towards your chest, while curling your torso towards your knees. This position is especially useful if you have a herniated disc because it opens the spaces between the vertebrae. Again, make sure to switch to the other side the following night!

If you enjoy sleeping on your belly, there is also a modification. It can stress your neck, so experts often recommend that you sleep in a different position – if you have neck injuries, it is especially important to heed your physician's advice. If not contraindicated, placing a pillow under the pelvis and lower abdomen can relieve back pressure. This position is helpful for people with degenerative disk disease because it relieves stress that is placed on the disks.

If you are a back sleeper, simply lie on your back on the mattress. Place a pillow underneath your knees. You can also place a small, rolled-up towel or blanket underneath the small of your back. This position is good for everyone – sleeping on the back evenly distributes weight; thus less strain is placed on pressure points.

**3. Pick a New Pillow**

I'm not joking when I tell you that I used to sleep with a pillow from my local dollar store. I had it since college. It was surprisingly comfortable and I loved it. When I saw a physical therapist for an unrelated issue, one of the questions they asked me was about my pillow. When I described it, she said, "It's got to go."

And what a difference it made in my back pain.

As it turns out, there is a science to picking out the right pillow. There's also a reason pillows can be so costly – excuse the cliché, but they can make or break your body:

- For back sleepers, a thinner pillow is recommended. Also, a pillow with extra padding at the bottom to support the neck is helpful. Ideal materials include memory foam or water pillows.
- Stomach sleepers need to find the very thinnest pillow possible – or sleep with no pillow. Why? Too thick of a pillow can hurt your neck. A thin body pillow may be a good option – it will give you something to hold against your stomach and help to align the body.
- Side sleepers do best with a firm pillow. It is also recommended to find a pillow with an extra-wide gusset (or a wide side panel). The pillow that you use between your knees should also be firm.

Another piece of advice? Don't hold on to your pillows for 10 or more years as I did! They are supposed to be replaced every 18 months. Replacing them regularly allows for the most support.

**Coyuchi organic pillowcase vs. Blissy silk pillowcase**

Coyuchi Organic Pillowcase and Blissy Silk Pillowcase are both popular choices for bedding accessories. Here are some differences between the two:

- **Material**: Coyuchi Organic Pillowcase is made of 100% organic cotton, while Blissy Silk Pillowcase is made of 100% mulberry silk.
- **Benefits**: Coyuchi Organic Pillowcase is soft, breathable, and hypoallergenic, making it a great choice for people with sensitive skin. Blissy Silk Pillowcase, on the other hand, is known for its anti-aging benefits, as it helps to reduce friction and prevent wrinkles and hair breakage.
- **Care**: Coyuchi Organic Pillowcase is machine washable and can be tumble dried on low heat. Blissy Silk Pillowcase requires more delicate care, as it should be hand-washed or machine washed on a gentle cycle with cold water and a mild detergent.
- **Price**: Blissy Silk Pillowcase is generally more expensive than Coyuchi Organic Pillowcase.

Ultimately, the choice between the two depends on personal preference and the benefits that you are looking for

in a pillowcase. If you are looking for a soft, hypoallergenic option, Coyuchi Organic Pillowcase might be the right choice for you. If you are looking for an anti-aging option, Blissy Silk Pillowcase might be a better fit.

**Cariloha Bamboo vs. Silvon Organic Pillowcases**

Cariloha bamboo and Silvon organic pillowcases are two options for those seeking a comfortable and sustainable pillowcase. Cariloha bamboo pillowcases are made from bamboo viscose, a soft and breathable material that is naturally moisture-wicking and hypoallergenic. Silvon organic pillowcases, on the other hand, are made from a blend of organic cotton and silver-infused fibers. The silver fibers are said to have antimicrobial properties that help to keep the pillowcase fresh and odor-free.

**4. Daily Yoga Practice**

You may have noticed through my articles that I am a big proponent of yoga. Yoga has many benefits. I have anxiety, asthma, migraines, and intermittent chronic back pain — daily yoga practice helps every single one of these conditions. I do not claim that yoga is any type of cure, but it helps me manage all of my chronic ailments.

This is my personal experience. Research released in January 2017 stated that yoga might reduce pain levels and improve mobility. The study was performed on over 1,000 men and women with chronic lower back pain. Although the study was small, the results were profound — researchers are asking for long-term studies to back up their findings.

How does this translate to you? Do yoga! There are plenty of resources.

Seek out classes in your communities. There are often classes designed specifically for people with lower back pain. Find an instructor who understands how to modify asanas (postures) to fit your needs. Once you learn the basics, you can create a home-based practice.

**5. A New Bed**

Although I have lower back pain from nursing injuries, my husband has worse back pain. He has bulging disks in his lower back and requires back surgery — he is trying to put it off at this time.

We made the decision, due to both of our back pain, to invest in a new bed. After all, our bed was old, we both had pain and we were sleeping poorly.

We went to a local furniture store and met with a mattress expert and tried lots of mattresses. In the end, we picked a mattress that was customized to our specific needs — his side of the bed has one firmness, and my side has another firmness. We both agree that it has made a huge difference in how well we sleep at night.

Expensive? Yes. Worth the money? Again and again.

So, what kind of mattress is best for you? In the best, a very firm mattress was recommended. Now, the line of thinking has changed a bit – a firm or medium-firm mattress is now recommended.

But what can you do if you have got bad back pain and cannot afford a new mattress?

There are several ways you can modify your existing mattress. You can purchase a memory foam mattress topper that is the correct firmness. You can also buy a piece of plywood and place it under your current mattress. Also, placing your mattress directly on the floor may lessen the movement of the springs of the bed, which may reduce your pain.

**6. Massage**

I try to get a monthly massage. I go to a massage therapist who is also trained in craniosacral therapy (CST).

According to SpineUniverse: CST “essentially helps the body release restrictions — which it has been unable to overcome on its own — that inhibit the body’s normal, self-correcting tendencies. Rather than deciding how these changes should be made, the therapist follows cues from the body on how to proceed. When the therapist follows this gentle approach, the method is extremely safe and effective.”

I find that massage, coupled with CST, is beneficial for both my migraines and lower back pain. Although I had more massages initially, I go monthly now, and it helps keep my symptoms at bay.

When my pain flares up, I ask my husband to give me a light massage before bed, which helps.

**7. Medication**

As anyone with chronic pain knows, having medication in our bag of tricks is essential. When the pain gets too severe, I do occasionally take medication to reduce the pain.

**In Conclusion**

While I have not done it all, in terms of finding ways to sleep better with back pain, I certainly have sought out various ways to improve my sleep.

Through trial and error, I found ways to reduce my pain, both during the day and at night. Reducing my pain during the day subsequently has had the effect of less pain in the evening (well, most of the time!).

Dealing with chronic pain is a challenge and I would not wish it on anyone. However, finding ways to live with the pain, and live well is a goal of mine – and I am happy to share these tips with you. Do you have anything to add to this list?