

Mattress Guidelines for Sleep Comfort

The right mattress can really help one have a good night's sleep and wake up feeling rested and refreshed. Sleeping on the wrong mattress can cause sleeplessness, back pain, and overall aches and pains. For people with a back problem, a mattress that isn't a good fit can make the pain worse.

When searching for the best mattress, remember that mattresses are largely a matter of personal preference. There is no single type of mattress or bed that works well for all people, and there is no best mattress for back problems. Likewise, there is no single sleep position known to be best for all people. This is due to several factors:

- There are many causes of back problems, and different back conditions may respond better to specific types of beds, mattresses and sleep positions.
- There is a high degree of personal preference for mattresses, and what works well for one person may not work well for another.
- There is very limited scientific study published on mattresses and back pain, and findings from the studies that have been completed are inconclusive.
- Overall, the causes of back pain can be quite complex, and it's

difficult to isolate whether or not a person's mattress has played a significant role in improving the pain or making it worse.

The bottom line is that the type of mattress that is best for any particular person is really a matter of personal preference.

The type of mattress one uses is not the only factor for patients with pain and sleep difficulty. Many other factors need to be considered that may affect sleep, including:

- Medication side effects
- Irregular sleep patterns
- Caffeine/alcohol/tobacco use
- Sleep apnea
- Anxiety/stress

If comfort is not the only thing making sleep difficult, it is advisable for the patient to consult his or her family physician to discuss other possible causes and treatments for sleeplessness.

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Qualifications

Graduated From: Palmer College of Chiropractic

Years in Practice: 30

Treatments

- Chiropractic Adjustments
- Ultrasound
- EMS
- Deep Tissue Massage
- Spinal Axial Decompression
- Orthotics
- Trigger Point Therapy

"Do what you do so well that people would want to come back and tell others." ~ Walt Disney

Experiencing significant or persistent back pain may indicate an underlying back condition that has nothing to do with the mattress. It is always advisable for people with back pain to consult with a health care provider for a thorough exam, diagnosis, and treatment program.

As a reminder, sleep comfort is first and foremost a matter of personal preference. No one should expect that switching mattresses or beds will cure their lower back pain, and changes in the type of bed or mattress used should be made solely for the sake of comfort.

Sleep Positions for Back Conditions

An important factor that can influence individual preferences for mattresses, beds and sleeping positions is the specific back condition a person has. For example:

- **Osteoarthritis.** Patients with pain from osteoarthritis of the facet joints may prefer to sleep on their sides

with their knees curled up (in the fetal position). This helps open up the facet joints in the spine and can relieve any corresponding pressure. Alternatively, sleeping in a reclining chair or an adjustable bed that allows the head and knees to be elevated can also relieve pressure on the facet joints.

- **Degenerative Disc Disease.** Patients with pain from degenerative disc disease may prefer to sleep on their stomach as this can relieve pressure on the disc space. Patients may feel most comfortable using a relatively firm mattress and placing a flat pillow under the stomach and hips, which can further reduce stress on the lower back.
- **Spinal Stenosis.** People with pain from spinal stenosis may prefer to sleep on their sides with their knees curled up (in the fetal position). This helps relieve pressure on the nerve root. Sleeping in a reclining chair or an adjustable bed that allows the head and knees to be elevated can also relieve pressure on the nerve.
- **Bursitis.** Patients who have inflammation of the bursa over their hips (greater trochanteric bursitis) can be especially susceptible to pain from a mattress that is too firm. If the mattress is too hard, a new

mattress with thick padding on top, or placing an egg crate foam mattress cover over the old mattress, can help provide some relief from the firmness.

- **Hip Pain.** Patients with hip pain who sleep on their sides can usually find some pain relief by placing a pillow between their knees. This decreases stress across the hip.
- **Herniated Lumbar Disc.** The most comfortable sleep position depends on the position of the disc. For a paracentral disc herniation (most common), patients will tend to do better lying on their stomach. For a foraminal herniated disc, sleeping on the side in a fetal position is usually better tolerated.

In general, elevating the knees slightly by placing a pillow under them while lying on the back can help many general forms of low back pain. Many patients also find that this is the most comfortable way to sleep after spine surgery.

Learn more about getting a good night's sleep. Visit <http://www.spine-health.com/wellness/sleep/mattress-guidelines-sleep-comfort>

Talk to Dr. Cafagna about specific questions related to your unique health situation.

**Contact Dr. Cafagna
to learn more or schedule an appointment**

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<http://www.spine-health.com/doctor/chiropractor/mark-cafagna-san-marcos-ca>