

## PAIN & INSOMNIA



The link between chronic pain and poor sleep is well established. Lack of sleep can worsen physical ailments, including pain, and in return, pain can make it difficult to sleep. The relationship creates a cycle with one feeding into the other, with over 40% of individuals with chronic pain also experiencing insomnia compared to just 10% of the general population.

### WHY The Relationship Between Sleep & Pain?



Chronic pain changes the way the brain works.



Negative emotions, stress, and anxiety can make it hard to shut off your brain to be able to sleep.



Chronic pain can lead people to be less active, which can lead to poorer sleep.



Inconsistent sleep patterns, such as sleeping or napping during the day, can cause a cycle of trouble sleeping at night.



Pain can make it hard to find a comfortable sleeping position or can wake you up during the night.

### THE EFFECTS of Poor Sleep

Over time, the impact of chronic pain + poor sleep snowballs, impacting both one's ability to sleep, and increasing the amount of pain experienced. It is common for individuals with chronic pain to experience issues falling and staying asleep. This can increase the experience of pain and symptoms throughout the day. In turn, individuals feel more emotional, irritable, and distressed because of their pain. These factors together negatively affect sleep, leading to further issues with pain and mood, contributing to a vicious cycle.

# **BREAKING** the Vicious Cycle

Behavior/habit changes can be effective for improving sleep



Change can be difficult



Change requires motivation

## Strategies to help improve your sleep:

Reduce time in bed and only go to bed when sleepy. Also, only use your bed for sleep. This helps to re-associate the bed with sleep.

Turn off all electronics and unplug from screens at least 30 minutes before bed.

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Our bodies like routine, and this helps to set our biological clock, or our circadian rhythm.

Avoid daytime napping. If you need a nap because of fatigue or pain, nap between 1-3 PM for less than an hour.

Allow your body be tired. Engage in exercise and activities out of the house throughout the day in order to increase tiredness.

Avoid big meals before bed. Also, reduce substances such as alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine. All substances alter your sleep and can lead to less restorative/deep sleep.

Manage your anxieties and stress before you go to bed. In the early evening, try clearing your head by writing down what's on your mind, categorizing your thoughts, and/or finding possible solutions.

**If sleep or insomnia is an issue for you, be sure to discuss it with your family physician.**

## **LEARN MORE**

**No more sleepless nights** by Peter Hauri, PhD

**Quiet Your Mind and Get to Sleep: Solutions to Insomnia for Those with Depression, Anxiety or Chronic Pain** by Dr. Colleen E Carney, PhD

**The Insomnia Workbook** by Stephanie Silberman, PhD

**The Feeling Good Handbook** by Dr. David Burns

**Sleepio** – [www.sleepio.com](http://www.sleepio.com)

**TAPMI**- <http://tapmipain.ca/patient/managing-my-pain/pain-u-online/sleep.html>



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