

# The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

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## Sleeping With the Right Pillow

Presented by: Erin Mills Optimum Health

### Introduction

Humans can sleep in a wide variety of positions and while there is no one position that is technically the correct way to sleep stomach sleeping is not considered to be good for your neck or low back. Side and back sleeping however are generally good although if you are on your side or back with the wrong pillow and the wrong amount of support you can experience the same type of neck soreness you may develop sleeping on your stomach. Using the right pillow in the right place during sleep can result in better sleep and less neck and upper back pain.



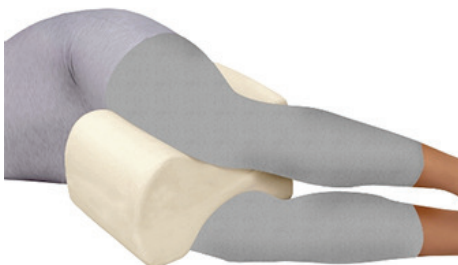
With each position, the placement and type of pillow may need to be different. If you have a neck issue, you may want to try using different pillows or trying different sleep positions to improve both your neck comfort sleep quality.

Sleeping on your back is a common way people fall asleep. If you generally sleep in this position, it is advisable

to place a firm pillow under your knees and a medium firm pillow under your head to reduce the risk of both low back pain and neck pain. The knee pillow takes pressure off of the low back. A neck pillow should not be to prop you up, but is designed to provide support to the natural curve of your neck.



Side sleeping is the most common sleeping position we attain while we sleep and it is the best position for your spine. Putting a firm pillow between your knees takes pressure off both hips and low back.



A firm neck pillow should support your head and neck in a straight line

### Exercise of the Week

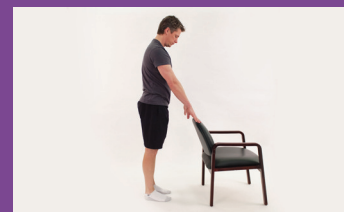
#### Calf Stretch, Variation 2

Difficulty: Easy

*(Consult your chiropractor before doing this or any other exercise.)*

**Start:** Standing behind a chair, or in front of a wall. Place hands on backrest or wall for balance.

**Exercise:** Place one foot behind other. Keeping heel on floor, bend knee and lean hips forward. You should feel tension behind lower leg, close to ankle. Hold for 30-60 seconds, relaxing muscles of lower leg. Switch sides, and repeat 2X per side.



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with the rest of your body. Two pillows or overly soft pillows may tilt your neck up or down stressing the muscles of your neck and allowing the neck joints to be jammed or stretched for periods of time that can result in stiff necks and headaches.



Finally, if you have to sleep on your stomach, put a pillow under your ankles also.



Rather than buying a king size pillow for a king size bed or a pillow that is a good fit for your sham but not for your neck, you need to look at your body size and your favorite sleeping position to help determine the type of pillow you need. Neither the price nor brand of pillow is a guarantee of its comfort.



While sleeping on your stomach is not advocated, if you absolutely can't break this habit, then learning to use good pillow placement may reduce your chances of waking up with back and neck pain.



Your chiropractor should be able to advise you of the correct pillow or placement of pillows that is right for your needs.



A firm pillow under your hips or stomach reduces the risk of low back pain. You may still need a head pillow in this position to support your head in a downward position. Having your head turned to the left or right to breathe while on your stomach is a great way to ensure neck pain.

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## Quote to Inspire

*"A ruffled mind  
makes a restless  
pillow"*

*-Charlotte Bronte*



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