

# Resting positions for acute back pain

This leaflet offers more information about resting positions for acute back pain. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

## Why does my acute back pain wake me at night?

Acute low back pain with or without leg pain can make sleeping difficult and sometimes impossible.

Feeling pain at night is your body's way of telling you that you need to move – so it is common for your sleep to be disturbed in the acute stages of back or leg pain as it will encourage you to move to a more comfortable position.

This will make you tired and when you are tired it's harder to cope with your pain - sleeping then becomes even more difficult, which then makes you more tired, a vicious cycle.

Pain is often aggravated either by extension based activities (backward bending) or flexion based activities (forward bending).

## Is there anything I can do to help myself?

You should try and work out the best resting or sleeping position for you, based on the type of activity that aggravates your pain.

**Prone lying** - lying on your stomach.



### Prone lying with pillow

Try to place one or two pillows under your stomach – this can give a great deal of relief.



**Supine lying** - lying on your back.



## Crook lying

If the muscles at the front of your hip feel tight, lying with your knees bent may help or you may prefer to try supine lying, but with a pillow or two placed under your knees.



## Side lying

This can be a good position to sleep in, with one or two pillows under your head for support. This position is particularly good if you are still in the early stages of pain, where even the slightest of movements can stir up your pain.



## Side lying with pillow(s) for support

You may find it more comfortable to place one or two pillows under your top leg, to help support this leg and your lower back in a more neutral position.



## Is there anything else I can do to help myself?

What you do in the few hours before going to bed can also affect how well you sleep.

Carrying out activities which aggravate your low back pain and / or leg pain during this time may unsettle your pain and then interfere with your sleep.

Try to work out what these activities are and either avoid doing them before bed or do them differently. Sleeping and getting out of bed in the morning should then get more comfortable.

Combine this with identifying

Try to also notice any other things that aggravate your pain and do less of these and any other things that ease your pain and do more of these.

By taking these steps and doing appropriate exercises, you should soon resolve your pain.

Taking pain relief before going to bed will also help you have a good night's sleep. Speak to your GP or a pharmacist about what medication is best for you and the best way of taking it.

## Useful sources of information

<http://www.csp.org.uk/your-health/conditions>

<https://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/Arthritis-information/Daily-Life/Pain-and-arthritis/Common-aches-and-pains.aspx>

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your back pain, please contact your physiotherapist on 020 8487 6022 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm). Alternatively contact us by email: [WACCG.physiotherapyoutpatients@nhs.net](mailto:WACCG.physiotherapyoutpatients@nhs.net)

We are also on Twitter: @QMHMSKphysio

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111



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