

Sleeping Position and Your Pillow

THE BEST POSITIONS

On your back: a pillow **under the knees**. This flattens the arch of the lower back and takes the strain off it. Use one pillow of medium height under the head.

On your side: a pillow **between the knees**, with the knees slightly bent and hips stacked one above the other. The head pillow must be **thick enough to keep the neck level with the spine** — filling the gap between ear and shoulder.

After hip or knee surgery: follow the specific instruction we gave you. Usually on the back, with a pillow between the legs and no pillow directly under the operated knee, which can leave it bent and stiff.

AVOID SLEEPING ON YOUR STOMACH

It forces your neck to stay rotated to one side for hours and flattens the low back. It is the commonest cause of morning neck pain. If you cannot break the habit, use no head pillow at all and place a thin pillow under the pelvis.

Choosing a pillow

- **Height matters more than material.** The neck should be in a straight line with the rest of the spine — not propped up, not dropping down.
- Side sleepers need a **thicker** pillow, back sleepers a **thinner** one.
- **One pillow, not a stack.** Two or three pillows push the head forward all night.
- Replace a pillow that has gone flat or lumpy. A rolled towel under the neck curve is a cheap and effective option.

THE MATTRESS

Medium-firm is best for most people — not a rock-hard board, and not a soft sagging one. A very hard floor or a sagging old mattress both cause back pain.

If your mattress sags in the middle, a plywood board underneath is a cheap fix.

Getting out of bed: roll onto your side first, drop your legs over the edge, and push up with your arms. Never sit straight up from lying — this is important after any back surgery.

Search: sleeping posture, pillow height, best sleeping position, mattress, back pain sleep

