

Dear Back and Neck Pain Sufferer

How important is a sleeping pillow?

What is important in sleeping? Is it softness, firmness, support, hot, cold, mattress, mattress cover, sleeping pillow, sheets, comforters, feathers, down, foam, water, buckwheat hulls, or what? We believe the most important thing in sleeping is being able to **sleep in a correct spinal alignment comfortably**. To accomplish this, you need two items: a quality mattress and a properly designed sleeping pillow.

A quality mattress will help spinal alignment from the middle of the back down. Many people will spend at least £300.00 for a new mattress because they have a problem with their upper back, neck, shoulders or head. Any issue dealing with your spine in the upper back, neck, shoulders and head is your sleeping pillow, not your mattress. **This is why a sleeping pillow is very important!**

What is a properly designed sleeping pillow? First, no one should sleep on his or her stomach, unless instructed by his or her doctor or therapist. It is impossible to maintain a correct spinal alignment lying on your stomach. **Do not sleep on your stomach!** That leaves two sleeping positions that a person can sleep in: on their back or on their side.

When sleeping on your back, you must have full support of the spine from the upper back through the head to maintain a correct spinal alignment. Because the height of a cervical varies in people, the **pillows must come in different sizes** to support the different heights. The natural curvature of the spine starts at the T-4 thoracic vertebrae in the upper back. This means **you must have an upper back wedge** on a pillow to support the thoracic part of the spine and that support must continue along the entire cervical part of the spine. With a thoracic wedge the shoulders will naturally fall back, helping to improve posture. Also, this will fully open the air passages across the chest, making it easier to breathe. Stress and tension from a hard day affect people in the upper back area across the thoracic spine area. The thoracic wedge will help relieve stress and tension, allowing people to relax and go to sleep much faster, getting a more restful night sleep. When lying on your back, your head must not be allowed to move too much laterally. If you have too much lateral movement, you will stretch and compact muscles in your neck or aggravate pain in the spine. Anyone with chronic neck pain or a whiplash injury will experience pain if they have too much lateral movement. The ears and shoulders should be at the same height. The throat should not be over stretched or wrinkled forward. This fully opens the air passages allowing you to breathe much easier. **In most cases, this will reduce snoring**. The pillow should be soft to allow for comfort and supportive to provide a correct spinal alignment.

When sleeping on your side, you must be at a height that matches the length of your shoulder from the flat of the neck to the outside tip of the humerus bone. Your head must lie flat in line with the cervical and thoracic spine to maintain a correct spinal alignment. Today, people sleep with their hand or arm under their head or they double or bunch up their pillows. This is a problem that they do not realize. Their pillow is not high enough and their body is telling them that something must be done to get to a proper height for a correct spinal alignment. Because the length of a shoulder varies widely in people, the **pillows must come in different sizes** to allow a person to sleep in a correct spinal alignment. Your shoulder should be vertical to the pillow to be in the best possible correct spinal alignment. The shape of the top of the pillow needs to allow for TMJ sufferers to comfortably sleep on their side. Also, the edge of the pillow cannot be too firm as to put pressure on the chin adding stress to the jaw connection. The pillow must be soft to provide comfort and supportive to provide a correct spinal alignment.

As you have read, it takes **two completely different pillow shapes and supports** to allow you to sleep in a correct spinal alignment on your back and/or your side. The pillow must come in different sizes to fit individual anatomies. It must be soft, yet supportive. This is the only way that the human anatomy can configure to a correct spinal alignment, comfortably.

Therapists who want to provide therapy for patients and help resolve problems also want to find products that will keep people healthier by maintaining a correct spinal alignment. **That is why a properly designed sleeping pillow is very important!** Therapists should work with patients to evaluate all pillows to determine which one or ones meet all of the requirements that are discussed in this article. What everyone must understand: **You are not just investing in a sleeping pillow; you are investing in your health.**

Thank you. Wishing you a pain free future!