

How to Pick your Pillow

Pillows are always a hot topic of discussion when it comes to neck pain, back pain, and posture. Pillows come in all shapes and sizes and are made of almost every material imaginable. Everyone just wants to know “what is the best pillow for me?” The truth is there is no one pillow that is best, but there are a few things that are very important when it comes to picking the right pillow.

We are concerned with pillows because of how much time we spend on them. Most people spend 6-8 hours on their pillow per day. That is about 25-33% of your day, every single day. You will spend more time in your bed with your pillow than in any other single spot throughout your entire life. How we sleep and having the right support has a big impact on our spine. We need our sleep to allow the pressure and tension that accumulates in our spine throughout our day to dissipate. While we are upright throughout the day, gravity is constantly compressing our spine and discs. The time spent laying down at night gives the body time to decompress and rehydrate the discs. This is why we are actually a little taller first thing in the morning compared to at the end of the day.

When it comes to picking the right pillow, you first need to know what your preferred sleeping position is. Do you prefer sleeping on your back, your side, or your stomach? We know most people move around while they sleep, so you may not stay in any one position the whole night, but what you need to know is which position is most comfortable. When you are trying to fall asleep at night, what position are you in the most? Once you determine that, you can determine a better pillow for yourself.

Back Sleepers

Sleeping on your back is the best position for your spine. It alleviates the most pressure and stress while you sleep. However, if you do not have the right pillow, it can create the most tension on your neck and shoulders. For back sleepers, less is more when it comes to your pillow. You want to make sure the pillow is not tilting your head upward from your back and shoulders and reversing the curve in your spine. You could actually sleep without any sort of a pillow when laying on your back, or just sleep with a rolled-up towel underneath your neck only. Since most people like to have some sort of pillow, the best pillow for this situation is a very flat pillow with some added support for the back of the neck to help maintain the proper curve and alignment throughout the night.



1
NECK IN NEUTRAL ALIGNMENT
Neck Supported with
Normal Cervical Curvature



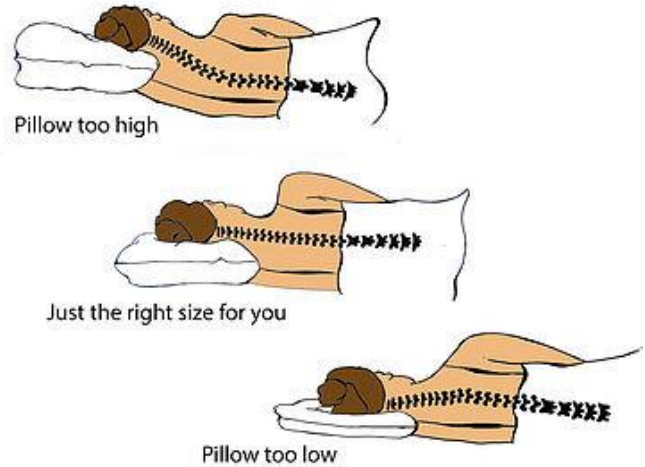
2
PILLOW TOO HIGH
Loss of Normal Cervical
Curvature



3
PILLOW TOO LOW
Exaggerates Cervical
Curvature

Side Sleepers

Sleeping on your side is the next best way to sleep in terms of alleviating the pressure on your spine from a full day of activity. When it comes to picking a pillow for side sleepers, the most important thing is support. The pillow you use must fill the gap between your head and the mattress. You do not want the pillow so thin and soft that your head bends down towards the mattress and you do not want the pillow so thick and firm that your head is angled up and away from the mattress. The goal is to maintain proper alignment of your neck while you lay in your most comfortable side-lying position. If your pillow is too thin, you may just need to add a cheap, flat pillow underneath to raise it up slightly. If it is too thick and you cannot flatten it out, you may need to consider getting a new pillow.



Stomach Sleepers

Sleeping on your stomach is the worst position for your spine as far as alleviating pressure on your neck and back while you sleep. If you sleep on your stomach regularly, you may want to consider changing how you sleep. It is not necessary to stop sleeping on your stomach, but it is strongly recommended. More likely than not, you will need to change at some point later in your life, so why not start working on it now while you are making other changes for your spinal health? Sleeping on your back or side will be much better for your body in the long run.

Once you have determined the right amount of support that you need out of your pillow, the next step is to just experiment. What the pillow is made out of or whether or not it has a cooling effect is not nearly as important as whether or not it allows you to sleep with your spine in its normal alignment. Once you have the proper support, material becomes personal preference. If you have any sort of sleeping condition such as sleep apnea or snoring and you have a pillow that helps with that specifically, then do not change it. However, you can still make modifications to your sleeping position to keep your spine in alignment as much as possible.

If you have any further questions, reference the video on this subject first for a demonstration. Keep up the great work! We look forward to helping you find the right pillow!