



Good quality sleep helps us feel refreshed and able to manage pain better.
There are many different strategies we can try to improve our sleep.

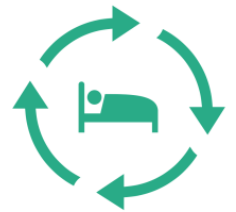
Sleep Duration



Over the age of 65, we need between 7-8 hours of sleep¹. As we get older, we might feel like we need less sleep, and sleep might feel lighter compared to when we were younger. We might fall asleep and wake up earlier, too.

Stages of Sleep

While sleeping, our body cycles through different stages of sleep: rapid eye movement (REM), light and deep sleep. One sleep cycle, where we move through all stages, lasts for about 90 minutes and repeats throughout the night. As we get older, our sleep cycles change. We spend more time in light sleep, and less in deep sleep².



Body Clock



Our bodies rely on cues such as time of day and light to know when to start initiating sleep. A hormone called melatonin helps regulate our body clock and our sleep-wake cycle. If we don't get into bed and fall asleep, our bodies return to a more alert state – we have missed catching the sleep wave. We need to wait for the cycle to repeat itself so we feel tired again and can catch that wave.

Naps

Long naps during the day can interfere with our ability to get to sleep at night. We can often feel groggy after waking from a long nap, and it can be harder to get to sleep at bedtime. Limiting afternoon naps to 20 minutes will be less disruptive to nighttime sleep.



TIP

It is hard to give up old habits, but if you can stick at a new routine you will see improvements! It might take a couple of weeks before you notice the benefits.

Opioid Medication



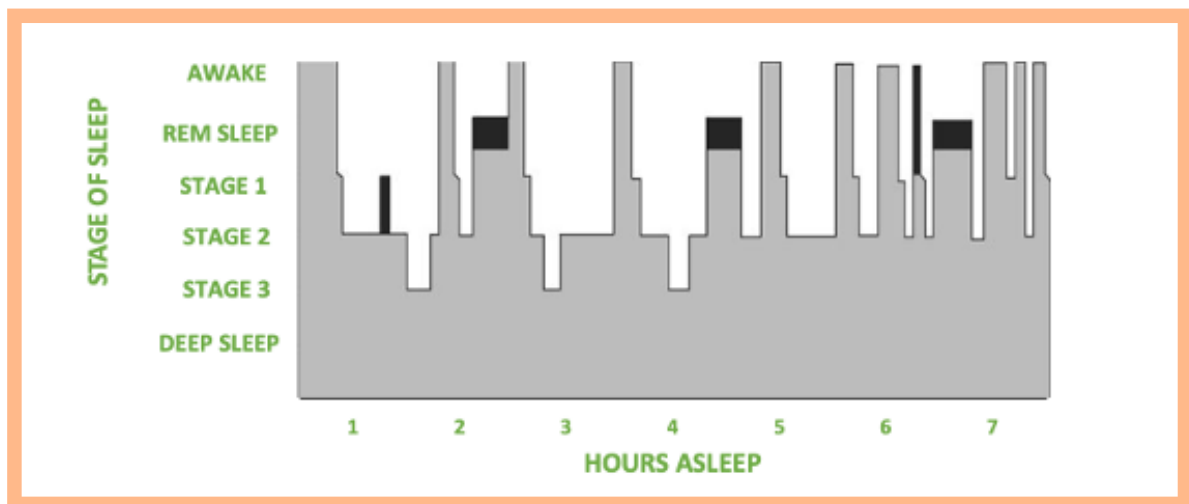
Taking opioid medication over a long time can impact our sleep³. We might find our bodies spend less time in deep and REM sleep, so our sleep can feel lighter.

Sleep Cycle

Throughout the night, we cycle through different stages of sleep, which all have different functions²:



- **REM:** dreaming and memory consolidation.
- **Light sleep (stage 1-3):** body slows down and is relaxed.
- **Deep sleep:** body restores and rests.



SLEEP APPS FOR A SMART PHONE OR TABLET

Download one of these apps from the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store to help you fall asleep and understand your sleep cycle.



Sleep Stream 2



Insight Timer



Sleep Time



Nature Soundscapes



Sleep Cycle

SLEEP HYGIENE STRATEGIES

Changing our habits and the environment can help improve sleep

These strategies can contribute to a better night's sleep. Tick the ones that you would like to try. Use these strategies consistently to get into new, helpful sleep habits.



How can I catch the wave of sleep?

- ☐ Get in to bed when you are feeling tired. After 20 minutes, if you are still awake, get up and do something calming until you fall asleep. Avoid bright lights - they will keep you awake.
- ☐ Have a regular time that you go to bed and get up in the morning.
- ☐ A bedtime routine signals that it is time to start winding down. Put on your pyjamas, enjoy a warm drink, and avoid stimulating activities like watching exciting TV shows.
- ☐ Eating meals and exercising at regular times can be helpful to re-train your sleep. Try to avoid alcohol and caffeine too close to bedtime.



Pain stops me from becoming comfortable at night...

- ☐ Include comfort strategies as part of your daily bedtime routine. Prepare heat packs, prop up pillows, and take any medication that your GP has recommended.
- ☐ Make sure that your bedroom, and bedding, is not too hot or cold. Find the comfortable temperature for you.



When I get into bed my mind focuses on my pain...

- ☐ Try switching your attention to something that relaxes you. Listening to your favourite music, audiobooks, or relaxing music can help.
- ☐ Focus on slowing down your breathing, as you breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. This can help your body feel relaxed. Remind yourself 'even if I cannot sleep, at least I am relaxing'.
- ☐ It can help to set a 'worry time' several hours before you go to bed. During this time, think about and problem solve any worries. Keep a notepad by the bed – if worries keep you awake, write them down to think about tomorrow. Bed is for sleep, not worry!



I often wake during the night and find it hard to get back to sleep...

- ☐ This is normal. If we try not to worry about waking up, it will be easier to get back to sleep. You will catch the next wave of sleep if you practice calming activities.
- ☐ Try distracting yourself. Count backwards from 100, count your breaths, or play some relaxing music.
- ☐ Keep a lamp within reach and remove any rugs so you won't trip if you get up.
- ☐ Face your alarm clock away from you. Watching the time pass can keep us awake.



CONNECT

Scan this code to hear sleep tips from people living with chronic pain:
bit.ly/opalma-sleep



Scan this code to learn about sleep disorders and when to seek treatment:
bit.ly/opalma-sleep-tips



1. Hirshkowitz, M., Whiton, K., Albert, S. M., Alessi, C., Bruni, O., DonCarlos, L.,...Catesby Ware, J. (2015).

National Sleep Foundation's updated sleep duration recommendations: final report. *Sleep Health*, 1, 233-243.

2. Kales, A., & Kales, J.D. (1974). Recent findings in the diagnosis and treatment of disturbed sleep. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 290 (9), 487-499.

3. Wang, D., & Teichtahl, H. (2007) Opioids, sleep architecture and sleep-disordered breathing. *Sleep Medicine Reviews*, 11 (1), 35-46.