



Sleep Strategies After a Motor Vehicle Accident

July 3, 2023



Difficulty sleeping

If you have been involved in a car accident, the physical and emotional toll can be overwhelming. One of the most common issues that car accident survivors face is difficulty sleeping. Post-accident, survivors commonly struggle with initiation and maintenance of sleep, erratic sleep patterns, frequent disruptions, and as a result significant daytime fatigue, extreme drowsiness, and decreased energy levels which directly impact their day-to-day function. Sleep difficulties can arise from a combination of factors such as pain, anxiety, stress, depression, physical inactivity, dietary habits, or daytime napping.

Identifying sleep problems

Sleep problems can make progress in recovery slower. Before coming up with a sleep strategy, it's important to identify the type of sleep problem you are experiencing. Do you have trouble falling asleep? Do you wake up frequently during the night? Are you waking up too early in the morning and unable to fall back asleep? By identifying the specific issue, you can tailor your approach to address it more effectively. A great way to monitor sleep and understand how it is affecting you is to track your sleep patterns. This can be done independently or with the help of a support provider or functional data collection tool.



Effects of poor sleep

- Effects of poor sleep
- Daytime sleepiness
- Mood changes
- Trouble concentrating
- Low energy
- Lack of motivation
- Impaired communication
- Memory problems
- Headaches
- Weight loss/gain
- Increased pain and fatigue
- Risk of fall/accidents
- Risk of hypertension/diabetes/heart issues



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Sleep hygiene

Sleep hygiene is the practice of good behavioral and environmental sleep habits that can help you get a better night's sleep. Having a consistent sleep schedule helps regulate your body's internal clock, making it easier for you to fall asleep and stay asleep. Over time, poor sleep hygiene can contribute to health problems including physical and mental health challenges. Working on establishing and maintaining a consistent sleep hygiene will help you feel rested and improve your overall health. If you continue to experience difficulty sleeping after implementing these strategies, seek professional help. A sleep specialist can help identify the root cause of your sleep troubles and develop a treatment plan to improve your sleep quality.

Strategies for good sleep

- Avoid activities that can be stimulating or stressful right before bedtime. This includes using electronic devices.
- Engaging in relaxing activities before bedtime can help calm your body and mind, making it easier to fall asleep.
- Resting during the day, but not napping for more than 20 minutes
- Avoiding heavy exercise and heavy meals for several hours before bedtime
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol for several hours before bedtime.
- Some of the best plants for promoting relaxation and sleep include lavender, jasmine, and aloe vera.



Why sleep is important

Sleep is essential for our physical and mental health, and getting enough quality sleep is critical for optimal well-being. Sleep affects our ability to heal, restore, repair, grow, metabolize, fight disease, develop immunity, and more. Even a few small adjustments to your daily routine can greatly impact your quality of sleep. Remember to be patient and consistent when implementing these strategies. It may take some time to see results, but with dedication and practice, you can set yourself up for long-term sleep success.