

Body Position Retraining

Sleep Apnea (pauses or obstructed breathing) may occur in all sleeping positions and with enough frequency to cause health related problems. However, in some cases Sleep Apnea may occur less often when sleeping on the sides. In most cases, obstructed

breathing occurs more often when sleeping supine (on back). When sleeping supine, gravity helps pull the tissue into the opening, blocking or restricting breathing. While not everyone who attempts side sleeping benefits from improved sleep, it is easy for a person to try on their own.

The benefits from side sleeping may only be realized when a method is used to ensure a person only sleeps on their sides. This method is called Body Position Retraining (BPR) and is easily accomplished in the home setting, and without purchasing special equipment. If your sleep specialist advises you to try BPR there are two important issues to keep in mind. First, it may take time to feel the benefits and it is best to try positional sleeping for at least one month. Second, if you are not feeling well, are unable to sleep on your sides, or after one month feel no improvement, contact your physician for advice.

Use the methods listed below to try BPR.

- Insert a tennis ball into a sock. Securely fasten with safety pins or sew the ball and sock to the center and back of a shirt between the shoulder blades. The ball should fall over your spine area. If you roll onto your back, you will feel the pressure of the ball and turn back to side sleeping.
- Using a small backpack filled with rigid foam, wear the backpack as usual and use the clip for the front shoulder straps to ensure it stays centered and in place.
- Wear the shirt or backpack all night and every night.
- Continue wearing the shirt or backpack even after you feel you no longer sleep on your back. People are not generally aware of all body position changes that occur during their sleep.

If Body Position Retraining improves sleep quality and daytime alertness, you may consider purchasing a commercially available product. Ask a home care provider or search the internet for companies offering products for side sleeping. Please, do NOT use pillows since they can move, smash down, and do not alert people to turn back on their sides.



For more information on improving
your sleep, please call **402-219-8742**.