Helpful Hints

1. Prepare yourself before going to bed
   - Take exercise early in the day.
   - Avoid spicy or heavy food or caffeine in the few hours before you go to bed.
   - Have a milky drink before bed.
   - Relax by listening to restful music, or completing relaxation exercises.
   - Make sure your bedroom is quiet and your bed is comfortable.

2. Go to bed only when you are sleepy.

3. Use your bed for sleeping. Avoid eating, reading and watching television in bed.

4. When in bed, relax and do not think about worrying issues. Identify all your worrying thoughts by writing them down on a piece of paper and leaving it downstairs.

5. If you have not fallen asleep in about 15-20 minutes, go to a different room and do something different such as reading. Return to bed after a break when you feel sleepy.

6. Avoid catnaps during the day. Try to establish a regular routine for going to bed and getting up.

Relaxing exercises

Hold each position for 2 minutes. Inhale deeply and exhale slowly. Relax.

Sit comfortably cross-legged (if you can).
Rest your hands on knees.
Breathe in and out for two minutes.
Hug your knees to your chest.
Breathe in and out for two minutes.
Stretch forward as far as you can and tuck your head in.
Breathe in and out for two minutes.

Sleeping positions

Your mattress should be comfortable for you.
Your neck should be in a neutral position (Fig 1).

On back, with neck in neutral position (Fig 1)

Side posture, with flexed knees, which decreases the low back curve

A pillow which is too high overstretchs the neck, arms and shoulders

Facing downwards stretches and tires the neck and upper shoulder muscles
**ENVIRONMENT**
- Temperature just right
- Bedroom dark and quiet
- Comfortable bedding

**BEFORE BED**
- Relaxation routine
- Exercise early in the day
- Reading
- Stretches
- Good sleep posture

**AVOID**
- Medications (in evening)
- Alcohol
- Smoking
- Sugars, spicy, heavy, late night meals
- Catnaps
- Caffeine
- Chocolate
- Stress
- Diuretics
- Steroids
- Television
- Stimulation
- Late evening exercise

**ORGANIC CAUSES**
- for physician to consider
- Depression/anxiety
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Cardiac failure
- Medications

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**www.nras.org.uk**
**Helpline: 0800 298 7650**