

## **Be careful reading in bed**

**Question:** Can reading in bed in an awkward position be the cause of my back and neck pain?

**Answer:** Reading in bed is a common way to develop back and neck pain if your posture is compromised for an extended period. You should use extra caution for your spinal curves when seated in bed because you are on a softer surface, which usually does not support the spinal structures. To compensate for the lack of support it is suggested you put a small pillow behind low back to support the lower curve and a small rolled up towel, slightly larger than your fist, behind your cervical or neck curve, for support. Special pillows with arm rests are available for bed readers but be careful not to slouch into the pillows for this will lend itself to low back discomfort.

Consider appropriate lighting while in bed also. Lighting focused downward and from behind will prevent squinting and head tilt. Ultimately the best head position will allow your vision to be straightforward. Putting a pillow under the knees is also helpful and will take strain off the legs and low back.

Falling asleep while reading in a seated position is a prescription for disaster. Your head can fall forward and your back can pull to one side or you can end up resting with all your weight to one side. When you do finally wake up and find yourself in some awful contorted position it is already too late. Call your chiropractor and get in immediately.

Watching television is even worse than reading in bed when it comes to potential spinal irritation. Most people use just a few pillows to prop up their

head, stressing the neck and shoulders. What you read, hear or see just before sleep can influence your subliminal consciousness and dream state. Negative stories on the news or scary novels can lead to nightmares or interrupted sleep. I suggest finishing your night prior to sleep with positive enriching stories or a series of affirmations or prayer.

**Quote of the week:** *“Do not worry if the sun will shine, just be prepared to enjoy it.”* – Anonymous