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Your Mattress and Your Health

It's a familiar story for everyone. You wake up on the wrong side of the bed, feeling groggy like you didn't sleep enough, with aches and pains that weren't there last night. However, maybe it's not the wrong side of bed — maybe it's the wrong bed. Your mattress can be the source of many problems, from illness to pain to exhaustion. The [Unified Chiropractic Association of Oklahoma](#) offers this information to keep in mind.

How Your Mattress Affects Your Health

1. *It can make you sick* – Mattresses are traps for dirt, dust, and bacteria. Since you can't exactly wash the dirt away, it stays inside until you find a way to release it. Breathing in gunk while you're sleeping [can lead to allergies](#) and other mental and physical health issues.
2. *It can make you ache* – After a mattress gets old, it starts to lose bounce and firmness. Without bodily support, an old mattress could cause aches and pains in your back and neck. Your spine should have proper alignment, not sink into the mattress. [The right pillow](#) also helps, while the wrong pillow could cause your neck to crane forward or lean back against

the mattress.

3. *It can make your sleep quality suffer* – An out-of-shape mattress reduces the quality of your sleep, leaving you exhausted by day. Tossing and turning at night could be attributed to an uncomfortable mattress with a poor support structure. When the mattress is old or the wrong level of firmness, it hurts your spinal alignment.
4. *It can keep you awake* – If you've been suffering from insomnia lately, think about how long you've had your mattress. Like sleep quality, the ability to fall asleep can be hindered [by a bad mattress](#). A good mattress allows you to drift off to sleep, and when you wake up, you should feel refreshed and ready for the day.

How to Care For Your Mattress

It could just be that your mattress needs a good cleaning to feel like new again. Try to:

1. Wash your sheets regularly, changing them out once a week. A mattress pad adds another layer of protection.
2. Use a homemade mattress cleaner to disinfect and freshen the mattress.
3. Vacuum your mattress to pick up dust and debris. [Consult online resources](#) or your mattress manufacturer for information about how often to vacuum.
4. Flip the mattress every three months or when your body leaves impressions.

How to Buy a New Mattress

Mattresses typically last for 8 to 10 years. If cleaning and maintenance don't help your mattress improve, then it might be time to get a new mattress. Be sure to choose the best option for your sleep style. Different mattress types work better for different sleep positions, light and heavy sleepers, and back pain. Do your research by browsing shopping sites and reading through online guides to find the right mattress for your needs.

Desirable levels of [firmness and plushness](#) vary by person. The more back pain you have, the firmer your mattress should be. Mattresses come in four levels of firmness:

1. Soft
2. Medium-Soft
3. Medium-Firm

4. Firm

Size also matters. Mattresses typically come in four sizes:

1. Twin (and Twin XL) – Best for children and small rooms
2. Full – Good for teens
3. Queen – Ideal for guest rooms or smaller adults
4. King (and California King) – Perfect for couples and tall adults

Mattresses are composed of four main materials, with the most popular type being a combination of spring and foam:

1. InnerSpring – Uses inner coils for comfortable bounce and support.
2. Memory Foam – Made of polyurethane, memory foam conforms to your body while providing support. They allow movement without disturbing your bedmate, and they're squeak-free.
3. Latex – Made of dense foam rubber particles. They're durable, firm, hypoallergenic and green.
4. Air – Adjustable firmness, but prone to damage. Airbeds are better as temporary sleep solutions.

Better Sleep Beyond Your Mattress

Regularly walking for exercise can significantly improve your sleep quality, as it helps to reduce stress and promote relaxation. By incorporating a daily walking routine, you can enhance your overall well-being and enjoy a more restful night's sleep. To find the best walking areas nearby, consult a walk score map, which provides information on pedestrian-friendly routes, parks, and trails in your neighborhood. By identifying these optimal walking spots, you can make the most of your exercise routine and experience the positive impact on your sleep quality, leading to a healthier and happier life.

Working from home can impact your sleep in various ways, as the lines between professional and personal life tend to blur. To maintain good sleep hygiene, it's essential to watch your caffeine consumption, particularly in the afternoon and evening, as it may interfere with your ability to fall asleep. Additionally, sticking to a consistent schedule for both work and bedtime will help regulate your body's internal clock, making it easier to wind down at night. Lastly, reducing screen time before bed is crucial, as blue light emitted from devices can suppress melatonin production, disrupting your natural sleep patterns. By being mindful of these factors, you can create a healthier work-from-home environment and enjoy better quality sleep.

If you've been waking up with pain in your neck, blame your mattress. If you're always tired, it's probably your mattress. If you're persistently sick with no

identifiable cause, it could be your mattress. However, if changing your mattress and pillow doesn't solve the problem or fix the pain, the best medicine might be a professional evaluation and a chiropractic adjustment. Visit the The [Unified Chiropractic Association of Oklahoma](#) website to find a chiropractor for you today!