



how to keep your SLEEP



from being *murdered*

It's just about the time to turn off the lights. You're more than tired — you're exhausted. It's been one of those times in life where everyday is simply full. Oh, there's stress. There's fun, too, but you aren't really enjoying it. Why? Because you have a nagging pain that won't let you really relax.

You push yourself just to keep going and get through the day. Meals, laundry, work projects, groceries, you name it — the list goes on and on. The whole time you're putting a good face on it, masking your discomfort. Maybe your friends and family know, maybe they don't, but no one — not even those who are closest to you — know just how much it affects you. By the end of the day you're just plain tired. Sleep calls to you.

But ...

There's a problem. It's been this way for a week or more, and now you're just so tired of it. As soon as you get still and start to doze off, the volume gets turned up your pain. At first it's just a little uncomfortable. But then, even as you long for sleep, all you can think about is how much it hurts. You turn over in the bed — the first time. More pillows, a different position. The pain eases up a little, and you get to the very edge of sleep. Then, like a fussy newborn, discomfort comes right back. Another adjustment. Another attempt at relaxing. Another failure. This time

frustration boils. You're still just as tired as ever, but now you're wide awake and staring at the ceiling.

Not only are you not getting the sleep you so desperately need, you're afraid it'll be another long night of tossing and turning until dawn.

Eventually the morning comes. You're not rested at all, but you pull yourself out of bed and start moving. Of course, you hurt. That's just the norm, now. But you push yourself and get the day started. Activity does you good and pain lets up some, as long as you avoid the wrong movements getting ready.

It takes being careful, you see. If anyone saw you getting dressed—oh, they'd laugh for sure. But what can you do? It hurts too much to move the way you normally would, and once the pain starts it doesn't let up. So you do everything you can to avoid painful positions, no matter how silly it looks.

Mid-morning comes. You're a pro at guarding against movements that hurt, and there's been enough happening that you really haven't noticed the pain. One thing stands out the most, though, and that's how foggy-headed you are. You try to focus, but every little distraction pulls your attention away. Your work isn't that hard, but it just takes longer than it should because you can't seem to get going. The mental cobwebs pile up. You yawn, wince, then notice that it's almost time for a snack.

A bite of chocolate would hit the spot. It's just there in your bag... You reach for it, but move wrong and fire up the pain. Like Old Faithful, it's still there. You adjust in your seat and stretch, but the pain isn't going away anytime soon.

To get your mind off of it, you take a bite. It's a familiar taste, but nothing to write home about. For the past how-ever long, ever since this pain started, nothing tastes good anymore. You eat out of habit, sometimes just to escape the pain.

Then, the first time you've seen her today, here comes Miss Pain-free. She hasn't even made it to your door, but you're already irritated. She's such a perfect person—always nice, always dressed well, always smiling. It's just not fair for anyone else to have such a perfect life. No one knows how you feel—hurting all the time, no sleep, and all the other things that are going on... Miss Painfree smiles at you. You make yourself wave back, but then grit your teeth she walks away. Like a covered pot on a hot stove eye, you feel your frustration about to boil over.

Lunchtime. You're hungry, but not really interested in food. Your body aches. You hurt. You've got a headache coming on. You don't want to see or talk to anyone. A few friends are going to get out for a bit, but, even though you're alone in your pain and frustration, you take a raincheck.

The afternoon drags on. Between bouts of not being able to focus on your work, and not being able to focus on anything but your pain, you don't accomplish much of anything. When 5:00 finally comes, you are the first one to the door. You've got a plan to pick up food on the way home, then hit the couch. The afternoon fades into the evening.

You're exhausted, but it's dread—and not peace—that wells up inside of you at the thought of trying once again to get some sleep.

Your thoughts follow a well worn path: *If I can just not make it hurt, then maybe it will get better on its own ... I can live with it – I always have before ... If I can get a new pillow then maybe that will help me get some sleep ... I'll just try sleeping in the recliner for a night or two ... I can probably find a website or talk to someone who has this kind of pain and that will help.*

Oh, you want to believe you can get better. You hope, and you pray, and you hope some more. The long string of sleepless nights keeps getting longer, and your miracle just isn't coming.

Underneath your attempt to keep going in spite of the pain and lack of sleep, underneath you telling yourself that you'll wake up one day and the pain will magically just be gone, underneath you wanting so badly to just get better, there is another force that is holding you in this pattern.

What is it? Fear.

It goes something like this: "If I go to the doctor I'll end up having to have a bunch of tests, and that'll go against my deductible. They might want me to go to therapy, but I can't be out of work that much. And, anyway, my neighbor, she had therapy and it didn't help her...and she said it HURT! Therapy goes against my deductible, too, so more money there. Nothing about this is going to be easy. I'm just not up to it ... I'm just not going to go."

If this is the reality you're facing, we want you to know that we understand. At Anniston Orthopaedics, we treat all types of painful conditions that interrupt sleep and decrease your quality of life.

"Sure," you say, "but what about my pain?"



That's a great question. Of course, the specifics of your situation are important to us. Just know this: the longer you try to live with pain the more stubborn it can be, and the longer it can take to overcome it.

We're here to help you turn down the volume on pain, so you can get back to living your life to the fullest, so you can finally get some sleep.

For a video about sleep positions that might help you get some relief, visit www.AnnistonOrtho.com/sleep.



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