

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SLEEPING BETTER AFTER KNEE REPLACEMENT



**A STEP-BY-STEP PLAN TO
OVERCOME SLEEP
STRUGGLES, BEAT
INSOMNIA, AND WAKE UP
RESTED AGAIN**

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INTRODUCTION

If you're struggling with insomnia and **difficulty sleeping after your joint replacement** — you're not alone!

Even though it's not often discussed, and you probably weren't warned about it before surgery, **sleep disturbances after joint replacement are incredibly common**. In fact, research has shown that it's **normal for patients to experience disrupted sleep** for about six weeks following surgery.^{1,2}

Beyond the research, this is something my surgeon colleagues and I have heard from our patients time and time again. I repeatedly hear phrases like:

- “My knee feels like a square peg in a round hole.”
- “I’ve tried every position, including a pillow between my legs, and **NOTHING** helps.”
- “I’ve been taking my medications and icing my knee just as instructed, but it doesn’t help me sleep.”
- “It’s not even really pain... I just can’t get comfortable.”
- “I have burning sensations in my legs and feet that keep me awake.”
- “I feel like I’m going crazy!”

If any of this sounds familiar, I want you to know two things: **It’s not just you, and it’s not your fault**.

This issue has been well studied and scientifically validated. Surgery itself creates a **physiological insult** to the body, triggering inflammation, hormonal changes, and other systemic effects that can disrupt sleep.³

The Good News: It Gets Better!

Several studies have found that while sleep disturbances worsen in the first few weeks after joint replacement, they **typically improve over time**. By three months post-op, many patients report sleeping better than they did before surgery!^{1,2,4}

So, How Do We Fix It?

Now that we've established this is a real and serious issue — and that you **will** get through it — what strategies can we use to speed up your recovery and get you sleeping well again?

I took a deep dive into the research and found lots of scattered information — fragments of advice from studies, anecdotal reports from patients, and insights from other doctors and online forums. Yet, there was no **comprehensive** guide dedicated to fixing this problem.

So, I decided to create one.

I spent hours analyzing both published research and real-world experiences to compile **every trick, strategy, and tool** I could find into one **ultimate** guide on how to restore your sleep after joint replacement.

Some of the strategies are obvious, some are unexpected, and a few may even seem counterintuitive. But I'd wager that no matter how much you've already tried to fix your sleep, **there are solutions in this guide that you haven't yet considered.**

Let's Get You Sleeping Again

This book is designed to be both **thorough** and **practical**. We'll walk through all the key information and then **put it together into a step-by-step plan** that you can easily follow to reclaim your sleep.

So, are you ready to finally fix your sleep and start feeling like yourself again?

Let's dive in!

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS GUIDE: SOURCES, TOOLS, AND HOW TO USE THEM

This book is designed to be a practical, easy-to-use guide for patients struggling with sleep issues after knee replacement. My goal was to eliminate unnecessary fluff and get straight to the point with actionable, evidence-based steps that will help you reclaim your sleep.

To ensure that the advice in this guide is both effective and well-rounded, I gathered information from three key sources:

1. Scientific Research & Medical Literature

Where applicable, I've referenced which recommendations are backed by scientific studies published in peer-reviewed journals. I have cited all sources throughout this book and included a full bibliography at the end, so you can look them up and read them yourself if you're interested.

2. Real Patient Experiences

Some of the best solutions come from patients just like you — people who have been through this same struggle. I spent hours reviewing patient forums and discussion boards, gathering firsthand accounts of what worked for others. This research also led me to innovative products I hadn't encountered before — many of which are included in this guide.

3. Insights from Surgeons & Health Experts

Not everything can be studied in a controlled experiment, and some of the best insights come from clinical experience. I spoke with surgeon colleagues and other healthcare professionals to gather their recommendations based on what has worked best for their patients. While anecdotal, this real-world experience carries a lot of weight and can be extremely valuable.

By combining scientific research, real patient experiences, and clinical expertise, this guide offers a **well-balanced, evidence-based approach** to solving post-surgical sleep issues.

I've structured this guide to be both concise and in-depth, with a focus on actionable steps rather than pages of theoretical discussion.

At the end of the book, you'll find:

- **A bibliography of scientific references** – For those who want to dive deeper into the research.
 - **A full list of products, apps, and resources** – To help you quickly find and/or purchase any recommended tools.
 - **One-page cheat sheets** – Quick, condensed guides summarizing key points that you can print out and refer to easily.
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A Note About Product Links

To make it easier for you to find the products, apps, and videos mentioned in this guide, I've included a full list of links at the end of the document.

These recommendations are based on **real patient experiences and my own research** — my goal is simply to provide practical tools to help improve your sleep and recovery.

Some of the links in this guide are Amazon affiliate links, meaning I earn a small commission if you purchase through my link — **at no extra cost to you**. Any earnings go directly toward supporting my YouTube channel, allowing me to create even more helpful content for joint replacement patients like you.

If you prefer not to use affiliate links, no problem! At the end of the guide, I've included **clear product images** so you can easily search for and find them yourself, without having to click any of the links in this guide.

At the end of the day, **what matters most is that you have the right tools to improve your sleep and recovery**. Hopefully, this makes it easier for you to take action and get results.

How to Get the Most Out of This Guide

While it may be tempting to jump ahead to see which sleep pillow to buy or which medications to discuss with your doctor, I **strongly recommend starting with Chapter 1** to nail down the fundamentals first. This is by far the most important chapter in this book.

If you still struggle with sleep after implementing these basics, later chapters will introduce additional tools, strategies, and expert tips — some of which may seem counterintuitive but have been shown to work for other patients.

This guide is meant to be helpful and informative, but it **is not a substitute for medical advice**. Always discuss new treatments, medications, or interventions with your doctor

before implementing them. I've included a medical disclaimer at the end of this book – please make sure you read and understand it so that you can **follow this guide safely**.

My hope is that this book gives you the answers you've been searching for, and helps you **finally overcome your post-surgical sleep struggles**. Let's get you back to feeling rested, energized, and ready to fully enjoy your new knee replacement.

Ready to get started? Let's dive into Chapter 1, which discusses the fundamentals that everyone must have in place for better sleep.

CHAPTER 1: SLEEP HYGIENE

The first thing we need to tackle is the habits that you've created around your sleep – including your schedule, routines, diet, and sleep environment. This is also known as **sleep hygiene**.

The important thing to realize is that surgery has disrupted your normal **circadian rhythm** and daily routine, which, on its own, can dramatically affect your sleep. You're now spending most of your time at home, being less active, off your usual schedule, and your body is completely out of sync. It's like being **jet-lagged on steroids**. Then, on top of that we add the physiologic stress of a joint replacement! The result is a body that's all out of whack, and it's **no surprise that sleep is difficult** under these circumstances.

So, our first step is to **reset your body's internal clock** by reinforcing clear signals for when it's time to be awake and when it's time to sleep.

Here's a list of **best practices** for sleep hygiene:

Morning Routine for Better Sleep

- **Get natural light within 30–60 minutes of waking up.**⁵ Ideally, this should be sunlight, but if that's not an option, use an LED light that mimics natural daylight.⁶ Aim for **10–30 minutes of exposure** to the edge of your field of vision (without staring directly at it).
 - Many LED lights claim to be **10,000 lux**, but often require you to sit too close to be practical. Also, most of the lights need to be plugged in and aren't portable, which can be hard to use when you're sitting in your recliner recovering from surgery and at a desk or table. After researching several options, I found the [Verilux HappyLight Halo](#) to be an affordable, portable choice that provides the right amount of light exposure (*Reminder: There's a section at the end of this book with links and pictures to all items mentioned*)
- **Wake up at the same time every day.** This helps regulate your circadian rhythm.
- **Consider alternative, gentle alarm clocks** if you prefer a gradual, more natural wake-up. Many people prefer not to be jolted awake with aggressive alarm clocks (me included). One popular type of alternative alarm is a **sunrise alarm clock**, which gradually illuminates the room to simulate awakening to a natural sunrise.

Amazon has several available at reasonable prices, such as this [Wake Up Light Sunrise Alarm Clock](#)

- Another option is to use a **smart watch or fitness tracker** to gently vibrate to wake you in **cadence with your natural sleep cycle**. This has worked best for me, and I find I'm less groggy when I wake up using my [Fitbit](#) than via a traditional alarm clock. Note: You don't need to buy the fancy expensive models to get this feature, as the entry level Inspire 3 has this feature.

Daytime Habits to Support Sleep

- **Avoid naps, if possible.** It's tempting to snooze while lounging in your recliner, but daytime naps can disrupt your sleep cycle. If you **must** nap, limit it to **30 minutes max**.
- **No caffeine within 8–10 hours of bedtime.** This one needs no explanation.
- **No alcohol within 8–10 hours of bedtime.** I know this one's tough, but alcohol significantly disrupts sleep quality, especially when combined with post-surgical medications.⁷ Taking a break from it can reset your sleep and improve overall health.
- **Avoid heavy meals before bed.** Give your stomach time to digest by leaving a gap between dinner and bedtime.
- **A warm, soothing drink** like herbal tea can help signal to your body that it's time to wind down. A favorite recommended to me by patients is [Celestial Seasonings SleepyTime Tea](#).

Evening Routine for Better Sleep

- **Dim the lights in the evening.** Reduce overhead lighting and consider using **candles** or **battery-powered electric candles** for a cozy, relaxing atmosphere. I personally use a set by [Shymery](#) — they're affordable, safe, and create a **soothing mood** just like real candles, but without any added fire risk.
- **Reserve your bedroom for sleep and intimacy only.** Avoid doing exercises or other activities in your bedroom during the day. Your brain should **associate your room with sleep** — not wakefulness.
- **Go to bed when you feel sleepy.** Don't push through that drowsy feeling at night; sleep when your body tells you.

- **Use blackout curtains** to eliminate light pollution. If you're not sure which to get, the New York Times has a helpful guide on [The Best Blackout Curtains](#).
- **If blackout curtains aren't an option, a high-quality sleep mask** can help. Many masks are uncomfortable or ineffective, but the [Manta Sleep Mask](#) is highly recommended for its thoughtful design, which seals around the eyes and blocks all incoming light.

Optimizing Your Sleep Environment

- **Use white noise.** Many smartphones have built-in white noise players, but if you prefer a dedicated machine, there are affordable options available. [LEICEX](#) makes a highly rated and very space efficient (i.e. tiny) option.
- **If noise is still a problem, wear earplugs.** These are widely and cheaply available at most pharmacies.
- **No screens for at least an hour before bed.** I know this one is **hard**, but looking at your phone or watching TV can **delay melatonin production**, making it harder to fall asleep.^{8,9}
 - **Better alternatives:** Read a book, listen to an audiobook, or play a **non-stimulating** podcast.
 - **If you struggle with phone use at night, keep your phone out of your room** to avoid the temptation of scrolling. This is especially important if you tend to look at your phone when you wake up in the middle of the night.
- **Make your bedroom as comfortable and luxurious as possible.** Even small touches — like a spritz of **lavender pillow mist** — can create a spa-like atmosphere and help you unwind.
- **Upgrade your sleep essentials if needed.** Consider investing in a **better pillow, mattress, or breathable sheets** for maximum comfort.
- **Keep your room cool at night.** Overheating is a major cause of night-time wake-ups. Use **layered blankets** so you can adjust your temperature easily. If you and your significant other have different sleep temperature preferences, one solution is **an [Eight Sleep Mattress Cover](#)**, which allows you to set a different sleep temperature on either side of the bed, and can help keep everyone happy while optimizing sleep quality. These are VERY expensive, but if you can afford them, you may find them helpful for sleep improvement.

Summing It Up: Master the Basics of Sleep Hygiene First

Before jumping into more advanced sleep strategies, **these foundational habits MUST be in place.**

My guess? **You've probably tried some of these but not all.** If anything is missing from your routine, **fix it first!** These small changes alone **can significantly improve your sleep quality — often without needing medications or extreme interventions.**

Once you've optimized your sleep hygiene, we'll move on to the **next step** in fixing your post-surgery sleep.

CHAPTER 2: MAKING YOUR SLEEP COMFORTABLE

What if you've tried **all the sleep hygiene strategies** and you're still struggling?

First off — **great job** on optimizing your sleep routine. By now, your room should be comfortable, and your schedule, habits, and environment should be signaling to your body when it's time to **sleep** and when it's time to **wake up**.

Now, let's take it **further** by making step-by-step physical **adjustments** that can help you stay comfortable in bed. For many people, this is where **the biggest breakthroughs happen**.

Ready? Let's get into it!

Find Your Most Comfortable Sleeping Position

To sleep through the night, it's important to **get comfortable and stay comfortable** to avoid being woken up from pain or discomfort. Many post op instruction guides will tell you to sleep in a certain position, but the truth is **the best sleeping position varies from person to person**, and you should use the one that is comfortable for you.

Some people feel better with their leg completely **straight**, while others prefer it **slightly bent**. Some sleep **on their back**, while others do better **on their side**. The key is to experiment with different positions and see what works **best for you** — there's no point forcing yourself to struggle with a position that's uncomfortable as that will only lead to limited and unrestful sleep.

Side Sleepers: Optimize Your Positioning

If you prefer sleeping on your **side**, **always sleep on the side of your “good” knee** (not the one that was replaced).

If you use a pillow between your legs, make sure it's **long enough to support your entire leg down to your ankle and foot**. **Short pillows** that only support your thigh or knee **won't cut it** — they can throw off your alignment and cause discomfort. I recommend a **long body pillow**, such as the [Minupwell Knee Pillow](#) for side sleepers.

Elevate Your Leg Comfortably

This is an area where many people struggle. On the one hand, elevating the legs reduces swelling and helps with pain, but on the other hand it's just so hard to do it comfortably! Regular pillows are uneven and hard to position well, and your legs can fall off them once you're asleep, which can be painful.

Thankfully, the solution is easy. There are **wedge pillows that are specially designed** for surgery patients to support the leg properly and keep it elevated safely throughout the night. The [LightEase Post-Surgery Leg Pillow](#) is highly rated by joint replacement patients, and comes in both single-leg and double-leg options.

A **yoga bolster** under your lower back can also help with leg positioning. However, a **rolled-up towel or small pillow** can work just as well **without the high price tag**.

Using (or Removing) a Knee Brace

If you find that you're most comfortable with your legs completely straight, try wearing a **knee-straightening brace** and see if it works for you. Any basic **stabilizing brace** will do, such as the [United Ortho Knee Immobilizer](#). (Tip: Buy the 12 inch one if you're short or have small legs, or the 16 inch one if you're taller or larger). In my experience, most people don't really like these braces, but it's worth a try if you find that your leg is most comfortable when it's kept completely straight.

Also, if you **have been wearing a brace but hate it**, don't force it — **take it off**. If something is making you miserable and uncomfortable, it's not going to help you sleep well.

Experimenting with Ice Therapy

Icing your knee before bed can help reduce swelling and discomfort, but again, the **right method varies for each person**. There are a range of different options, from low-tech and cheap to fancy and expensive, and all of them can potentially be very helpful:

- A **flexible cold pack in a towel** – cheap and quick, but requires more futz to get in place comfortably and the cooling effect can wear off quickly.
- A **knee wrap with built-in cold pack** – This is easy to wrap in place comfortably, but again can lose cooling effect over time. The [KingPavonini XXL Ice Wrap](#) is cheap and easy to apply.

- A **cold therapy machine** – These are more expensive, but can give targeted cryotherapy with added compression, which can be very therapeutic. Many patients rate the [Aircast Cryo Cuff](#) highly.

Pro tip: Some insurance plans or FSAs **may reimburse** cold therapy machines if you get a **prescription from your doctor** — it’s worth asking!

IMPORTANT: If you’re using any kind of cold therapy, **NEVER** place ice or an ice pack **directly on your skin** for long periods! **Frostbite is a real risk. Always** use a barrier, like a thin towel, stocking or pair of pants between your skin and the ice.

Preventing Restless Legs and Nighttime Discomfort

Some people experience **restless legs** or discomfort in bed that keeps them awake. This can sometimes be related to decreased blood flow to the leg, or from inactivity throughout the day. Other patients have had success with a few simple strategies:

- **5 minutes on an exercise bike (with no resistance) before bed.**
 - This can **boost circulation** and reduce restlessness—but be careful **not to overstimulate yourself** and wake yourself up! It should be just enough to get your legs moving and blood flowing.
- **Try a “legs up the wall” stretch for a few minutes before bed.**
 - This simple stretch, shown below, **promotes circulation**, reduces swelling, and helps your legs feel more relaxed.



Summing it up: Experiment to Find What's Comfortable for You

If you've **optimized your sleep hygiene** and still aren't comfortable, these **physical adjustments** could be the missing piece. They might seem simple, but I've taken these tips and strategies **directly from other patients who confirmed that they were helpful**.

Key takeaway: Experiment with different **positions, pillows, ice therapy, and movement** until you find what **works best for you**.

Next up, we'll dive into **even more advanced strategies** to help you get back to sleep if you find yourself frequently waking up in the middle of the night.

CHAPTER 3: HOW TO GET BACK TO SLEEP IF YOU KEEP WAKING UP DURING THE NIGHT

By this point, your **sleep habits should be in place**, and your **bed setup should be comfortable**. My guess? You're probably **falling asleep fine**, but you **keep waking up in the middle of the night and struggle to get back to sleep**.

This is **very common** after joint replacement surgery, but the good news is—**we can fix it!**

The key is to **prepare ahead of time** so that when you wake up, you have **effective strategies** ready to minimize sleep interruptions and get you **back to sleep as quickly as possible**.

1. Keep Pain Meds and a Drink Within Arm's Reach

If **pain** wakes you up, you want to be able to take your **pain medication immediately** without having to **get out of bed** and disrupt your sleep cycle.

Keep a **small bottle of water** next to your bed as well, so you don't need to fully wake up and walk over to the sink.

2. Relieve Restless Legs with Simple Movements

If your legs feel **restless or jittery** when you're lying in bed, try doing these two simple movements:

1. A few rounds of ankle pumps –

- Flex and extend your ankles, like you're stepping on and off a gas pedal.

2. Pressing your knee straight down into the bed –

- Think about squeezing the muscle on the front of your thigh (your quadriceps) and making your leg so straight that the back of your knee pushes down into the bed.

These **gentle movements** promote **blood flow** and help **release built-up tension**, often calming your legs enough to let you fall back asleep.

If restless legs are an ongoing problem, or you have a history of restless leg syndrome (RLS), it's worth talking to your doctor about potentially starting iron supplementation, which can be helpful for many people who have RLS.¹⁰

3. Use a Recliner as a Backup Sleeping Spot

If you **just can't get comfortable** lying in bed, have a **recliner next to your bed** as an easy alternative.

If you need to move to the chair, do it **as quickly as possible** to avoid waking up too much.

Many people find **sleeping in a recliner** works better for them during recovery, at least for the first few weeks, so having the option to switch to one quickly can help you stay in a relaxed state and get back to sleep quickly.

4. Use Audio-Guided Relaxation Techniques

If your **mind won't settle** when you wake up, audio-guided relaxation techniques can **help shift you back into sleep mode**.

There are several **effective** options:

A. Guided Sleep Meditation & Visualization

- **If traditional meditation hasn't worked for you**, try guided imagery (visualization) instead.
- **Guided imagery** is a relaxation technique where you **imagine yourself in a calm, serene setting** (such as the beach, mountains, or a quiet forest).
- This technique has been shown in **medical research** to help with **both pain control and sleep after surgery**.¹¹
- It's hard to suggest any specific one because everybody has different preferences on what kind of place they're visualizing and what kind of voice they like to guide them.
- Search **"guided sleep meditation"** or **"guided visual imagery for sleep"** on **YouTube** and try **different options** until you find a voice and style that you enjoy. If you're unsure where to begin, try this try using this [guided imagery sleep meditation at the beach hut](#).

B. Non-Sleep Deep Rest (NSDR) & Yoga Nidra

- **NSDR is a deep relaxation technique recommended by Stanford neuroscientist Andrew Huberman.**
- **There are several types of NSDR protocols, but the one he recommends is based on the traditional practice of Yoga Nidra**, a guided meditation method that involves **lying down, focusing on breath and body sensations**, and entering a state of deep relaxation while remaining conscious.¹²
- NSDR can be helpful to **induce deep relaxation and reset the nervous system**, making it easier to fall back asleep.
- This protocol can be used as an alternative to napping for short rest during the day, and can also ease you back into sleep at night.

- I recommend trying the **10-minute NSDR session on YouTube**, which can be found by searching for “Huberman NSDR” or clicking this link: [Huberman NSDR Session](#)

C. Sleep Hypnosis

- **Hypnosis is an underutilized but potentially valuable tool for both sleep and pain management.** Although the clinical research is not 100% conclusive, there are a lot of promising findings that show potential benefit with low risk of harmful side effects.¹³
- One **randomized controlled trial** even showed that patients who had previously taken opioids were able to **reduce the amount of narcotics they took after knee replacement when they used a post-op hypnosis protocol.**¹⁴
- It’s important to note that this is not the “stage hypnosis” you’ve seen on TV — it’s a **guided process that helps train your brain to relax deeply and drift off to sleep.**
- Thankfully, new apps and technologies have made **safe hypnosis much more accessible** to everyone in the comfort of their own home.
- Youtube also has **several sleep hypnosis sessions available for free**, such as this one: [Talk-Down Guided Meditation Hypnosis for Sleeping](#)
- **The Reveri app** (www.reveri.com) is a highly rated mobile app developed by Dr. David Spiegel, a psychiatrist at Standord. Some sessions are **free**, while others require a **low-cost subscription** (which you can cancel anytime). This app includes **self-hypnosis protocols** specifically designed for **sleep and pain relief**, so is a good starting point for people who have just had their knee replaced.
- Overall, hypnosis offers a **safe, non-invasive and relatively cheap and accessible method** of potentially improving your sleep and reducing your post-operative pain. Even if it **doesn’t work for everyone**, the **low risk and ease of access** make it a **worthwhile intervention** to try if you're struggling with sleep after surgery.

Summing it up: Plan Ahead and Use Audio Tools to Help You Get Back to Sleep

If **waking up in the middle of the night** is your biggest challenge, **be proactive** about managing it. Keep pain medication and water **within reach**, try gentle leg movements to **calm restlessness**, and use a recliner if lying down isn't comfortable. Just as important, **have a relaxation method ready** — like guided imagery, NSDR, or hypnosis—to help **settle your mind** and guide you back to sleep. With some planning and the right tools, you can navigate these wake-ups and get the restorative rest your body needs.

CHAPTER 4: GETTING THE PAIN UNDER CONTROL

For some people, the **main reason they can't sleep is pain**. If that's the case, it's going to be **very difficult** to fall and stay asleep — no matter how comfortable your bed is or how soothing your meditation playlist sounds.

If pain is your biggest barrier to sleep, let's dive into **effective strategies** to get it under control.

1. Keep Pain Manageable — Don't Let It Spiral Out of Control

As I always tell my patients, **pain is inevitable after major surgery**, but the goal is to keep it **manageable**, not **excruciating**.

Think of **pain on a scale of 0 to 10**:

- **0 = No pain**
- **10 = The worst pain imaginable**
- **Our goal: Keep pain in the 4–6 range** (manageable for most people).
- If pain reaches **8–10**, it becomes **much harder to control**, so don't wait until it gets that bad!

To keep pain within manageable limits, **first make sure you're following the basics**:

- **Rest, ice, and elevation** as instructed by your surgeon.
- **Take your pain medication as prescribed, especially the non-narcotic medications** that are designed to keep your baseline pain level low (e.g. Acetaminophen (also called Tylenol), anti-inflammatory medications (such as Naproxen, meloxicam, celecoxib, ibuprofen), and nerve medications (such as gabapentin)).

Second, avoid the common mistake of skipping pain meds.

Some patients try to **tough it out** and avoid taking medication, making their recovery **far harder than it needs to be**. You've been prescribed these medications for exactly this situation – so use them if you need to!

While I'm not a fan of **long-term narcotic use**, if you're in severe pain, it's important to **take your medications as prescribed — especially in the first few days after surgery**.

Remember that **Pain control = better sleep**. If you're in too much pain to sleep, **your body won't heal as well**.

- **Pro tip:** Keep your pain meds **next to your bed with a glass of water** so you can **take them immediately** if you wake up in pain.

2. Be Strategic with Medication Timing

Even though I've just said above that you should take pain meds at night time if you need them, it's always a good idea to try and **minimize taking stronger opioid medications** (like oxycodone) **close to sleep, because they can disrupt sleep quality**.³ This is why it's so important to try and use **other pain control methods close to sleep time** to minimize dependence on them.

A valuable technique that has worked **extremely** well for my patients is to **stagger your medications for longer-lasting pain relief**. In other words, don't take everything all at once, but rather spread it out so that every hour or two you're taking a different pain medication.

Example of a Staggered Medication Schedule:

1. **8 PM:** Take your **narcotic pain medication** (e.g., oxycodone).
2. **9 PM:** Take **Tylenol/Acetaminophen** (if prescribed).
3. **10 PM:** Take **Tramadol** (if prescribed).

4. **11 PM:** Take **Gabapentin/Pregabalin** (if prescribed).

By **spreading out your doses**, you:

- Avoid long "gaps" where pain can creep back in.
- Get a layered effect of pain relief over several hours.
- Can potentially avoid taking narcotics right before bed, reducing their impact on sleep quality.

This is a powerful method for controlling pain.

3. Try Topical Pain Relief Options

Oral medications aren't your only option! **Topical treatments** can provide extra relief **without the side effects of oral meds**. Here are some I recommend:

- **Diclofenac Gel (Voltaren) – A Topical Anti-Inflammatory**
 - **What it is:** A **cream/gel** that reduces inflammation and pain when applied directly to the knee.
 - **Why it's great:**
 - Low risk of side effects
 - Easy to apply
 - Can be used alongside other pain meds
 - **Where to get it:** Available over the counter or on Amazon: [Diclofenac Gel \(Voltaren\)](#)

⚠ Important Warning: DO NOT use Diclofenac gel if you are on blood thinners (e.g., Eliquis, Xarelto). It can interact with these medications, so **check with your doctor first!**

- **Pain Relief Patches (Various Brands)**

- **What it is:** A medicated pain relief patch that sticks to your skin and delivers **targeted pain relief**. Typically, these contain lidocaine, which is a medication that numbs the top layers of your skin and soft tissue. Some patches also contain other compounds like menthol or capsaicin. These medications typically only work on more superficial pain (close to the skin surface), rather than deeper pain in the joint, but some patients still find them very helpful. I've heard patients recommend SalonPas patches as one of the better brands available.
- **Why it's great:**
 - No risk of drug interactions (**safe for people on blood thinners!**)
 - Can be safely worn **overnight**
- **Where to get it:** Available at Amazon: [Salonpas Pain Relief Patch](#)

4. Managing Burning Nerve Pain at Night

If you're experiencing **burning, tingling, or electric-shock-like pain in your legs**, this may be **nerve pain** rather than just surgical pain. There are medications specifically designed for this kind of pain that may be more effective than narcotic medications.

The two **most commonly prescribed nerve medications are Gabapentin (Neurontin) or Pregabalin (Lyrica)**. Both of these medicines are not available over the counter and require a prescription from your doctor.

A common 'side effect' is **drowsiness**, which is actually beneficial in this case as it can **help you sleep better**.

If you're already taking one of these but **not feeling relief**, **ask your doctor** if your dose needs adjusting. **NEVER adjust your dose on your own.**

Summing It Up: Use Multiple Strategies to Control Pain

Getting pain under control **isn't just about what medications you take**—it's about:

- **When** you take them
- **What combinations** you use
- **Using adjunct treatments** like **topical pain relief, patches, and nerve pain medications**

Good pain management involves a **'multimodal'** strategy, using a variety of strategies and medications to keep the pain at bay and minimize reliance on stronger narcotic medications. By **fine-tuning your pain management plan**, you'll **not only feel better overall, but you'll also be able to sleep better** — which is critical for your recovery.

CHAPTER 5: OTHER WAYS TO TACKLE INSOMNIA

Many patients tell me that it's **not pain** or discomfort keeping them awake — **they simply can't sleep.**

Whether you've struggled with insomnia before surgery or this is a new issue, it can be **extremely frustrating and anxiety-inducing** when you just can't fall asleep — even when everything else seems in order.

The good news is that there are **plenty of tools, tips, and strategies to help.**

Let's dive in to the best ones I've found.

1. Make Sure Your Stomach Isn't Keeping You Awake

Post-surgical constipation, often caused by narcotic medications, is very common and may be disrupting your sleep without you even realizing it.

If you're constipated, try these over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, in this order:

- **Stool softeners** such as Colace or Senna
- **Gentle laxatives** like Miralax (Polyethylene glycol)
- [Magnesium Citrate](#) if you're really struggling and other options aren't effective

(The first two listed above can easily be found at any local pharmacy, but the magnesium may be harder to find, so I've provided an Amazon link).

Important note: Be careful with these and add them one at a time. **If you get too carried away, you might have the opposite problem** and find yourself running to the toilet all night with diarrhea. This is especially true with Magnesium citrate, which is very strong.

2. Try Over-the-Counter (OTC) Sleep Aids

Melatonin is a popular, non-addictive, and low-risk sleep aid. It tends to be **particularly helpful during the first few days after surgery** but may be less effective long-term.^{15,16}

Many patients have found success with melatonin products like the [Olly brand](#), which also includes L-Theanine for additional relaxation benefits.

Melatonin works well for some people **but not everyone**. If you've tried it and didn't notice much improvement, don't get discouraged — there are other over the counter options.

Benadryl (Diphenhydramine) can sometimes help with sleep but **comes with more side effects**, including daytime drowsiness, brain fog, and, in some cases, **delirium**.

Benadryl can be risky for older adults (65+) due to its effects on cognition. This is especially true when taken at the same time as narcotic meds or other prescriptions that induce drowsiness, such as gabapentin (which is often the case after surgery). If you're not careful, this can lead to **delirium and increased fall risk**, which is **VERY** dangerous. **For this reason, I DO NOT recommend that you take Benadryl unless you're under 65 and melatonin doesn't work.**

3. Talk to Your Doctor About Prescription Sleep Medications

If you're really struggling with sleep and **all of the options above still aren't working for you**, it may be time to talk to your doctor about prescription sleep medications. You should **try avoid these if possible**, as they all have some side effects. I personally **don't ever prescribe these** for my patients, but in case you and your doctor decide to go down this route, these are the most likely medications you'll try:

- **Duloxetine (Cymbalta) or Trazodone**

These medications are sometimes used to help with sleep in post-surgical patients.

They are **not well-studied in joint replacement populations**, but have been reported as helpful by some surgeons and patients anecdotally.

- **Ambien (Zolpidem) – The Last Resort**

Ambien is a **strong prescription sleep aid** that **should only be used in extreme cases**.

It comes with important risks, including:

- **Habit formation (i.e. you can get addicted to it)**
- **Respiratory depression (i.e. stops you from breathing normally)**, especially when combined with opioids
- **Increased risk of confusion or falls**, particularly in older adults

For these reasons, **Ambien should be avoided in most patients**. However, in younger patients (under 65), it may be used as a last resort under **careful medical supervision**. If you are considering this option, discuss it thoroughly with your doctor first and **make sure you understand all the potential side effects**.

4. Exploring Cannabinoid Medications

Cannabinoid medications like **CBD and THC are controversial** but can be effective for some patients.

- **CBD (Cannabidiol) – The Non-Psychoactive Option**

CBD is widely available, **does not get you ‘high’**, and is **generally considered low-risk**. Many patients find it helpful for relaxation and sleep, though not everyone sees benefits. **Research studies** looking at CBD for sleep have shown **mixed results**, but there does seem to be some **benefit in patients with underlying anxiety**.¹⁷

- **THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol) – The Psychoactive Option**

THC is **more controversial**. As with CBD, **research studies have not definitively proved that it helps with sleep**.¹⁸ That being said, I have spoken to several patients who anecdotally felt that it helped them get to sleep without relying on narcotics or other prescription pain medications. It's important to know that **THC comes with several potential downsides**:

- **Only legal with a Medical Marijuana Prescription Card** in many states
- Potential **side effects** like **grogginess, dizziness, or paranoia**
- Possible **interactions with other medications**, including opioids and sedatives

Some states allow recreational THC use (i.e. without a prescription card), others permit it for medical purposes only, and **some prohibit it altogether**. If you live in a medical-only state, speak with your doctor to see if you may qualify for medical marijuana. If you choose to try THC on your own, **proceed cautiously** and **always consider how it may interact with your other medications**.

A Critical Reminder

Now that we're getting into some controversial stuff, it's a good time to remind you that **this guide is intended to be educational and informative but is not a substitute for medical advice**. Always consult your doctor before starting any new medication, supplement, or treatment strategy.

Refer to the medical disclaimer at the end of this book for more information.

Summing it up: Insomnia after surgery is frustrating, but there are many safe and effective tools available.

If pure insomnia is your main challenge, **don't panic**. First, go back and **make sure you've tried all the techniques and strategies in the early chapters** of this book, like sleep hygiene. Then, if you're still having issues, **start addressing other common culprits** like constipation and consider carefully selected OTC sleep aids such as melatonin. **Avoid risky medications like Benadryl** if possible. For persistent cases, prescription options and cannabinoid therapies may be helpful but **should always be discussed with your healthcare provider**. With the right plan, you can find a solution that works for you and finally get the rest you need for a smoother recovery.

CHAPTER 6: MENTAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES OF SLEEP DISTURBANCE

Let's talk about an **extremely common but rarely addressed** cause of sleep problems after joint replacement — the **mental and psychological side of sleep**.

Studies show that in about 30% of patients experiencing post-operative insomnia, it is actually anxiety, not pain, that is keeping them awake.³

If this sounds familiar, the **important thing to know is that this is normal and temporary.**

Research shows that **sleep often deteriorates for a few weeks after joint replacement but then improves steadily** after that.^{1,2}

You are not alone, and **you will get through this**.

Just like your knee or hip will gradually recover, **so will your ability to sleep**. The more you can **release the worry about sleep** itself, the smoother the process tends to become.

In this chapter, I'll share with you some **Mind-Body techniques** that I recommend to help **ease your mind and let the anxiety fade** away.

Meditation, guided imagery, and hypnosis

These can all be helpful tools to ease anxiety and promote sleep.^{3,11} As mentioned earlier in this book, YouTube has many guided meditations and imagery sessions. Search around to find one that resonates with you, **or if you're unsure where to begin**, try using this [Guided imagery sleep meditation at the beach hut](#) or this [Talk-Down Guided Meditation Hypnosis for Sleeping](#).

Also highly regarded is the [Reveri](#) app (also mentioned earlier), which offers **self-hypnosis sessions created by a psychiatrist**.

Both of these options are either free or relatively low-cost and **can make a significant difference in calming anxiety and settling your mind** before sleep.

Binaural Beats

If you prefer not to listen to talking or guided sessions, another option is to try **binaural beats**.

This technique involves listening **to two slightly different sound frequencies in each ear, resulting in your brain perceiving a third tone** — the "binaural beat." The theory is that when this beat matches a brainwave frequency associated with sleep or relaxation, it may help **shift your brain into a more restful state**.

While the scientific research on this method is not conclusive, some studies suggest potential benefit.^{19,20} In my view, **it is worth trying since it is safe, simple, and often freely available**. You can find many free tracks online, such as: [The DEEPEST Healing Sleep - Binaural Beats](#)

Therapy for Sleep-Specific Anxiety

If it is within your means, consider working with a trained therapist who specializes in treating sleep issues. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I)**, either in-person or virtual, can be a game-changer for many patients and is especially helpful when anxiety is interfering with recovery.²¹

Be Prepared for Middle-of-the-Night Anxiety

As discussed earlier, **having a NSDR protocol, meditation, or hypnosis session ready** on your phone **before you go to sleep** gives you a powerful tool when you wake up anxious in the night. Being able to turn on a calming audio session **immediately** can help relax your mind and ease you back into sleep without spiraling into frustration.

A quick note: Earlier in this guide, I recommended keeping your phone out of the bedroom to avoid late-night scrolling—which raises a fair question: *how can you listen to these tracks if your phone isn't nearby?*

One solution is to use a device that gives you **access to your audio**—but **without the temptation to start browsing**. That might be an old tablet, a laptop, or any device that's easy to play audio on but **inconvenient enough that you won't start mindlessly browsing** or scrolling. This way, you still get the benefit of calming audio without the downside of screen time pulling you further from sleep.

Avoid Sleep Trackers (for Now)

This may seem **counterintuitive**, but **if you use a wearable sleep tracker** such as an Oura ring, Fitbit, Apple Watch, or Whoop, **I recommend removing it for now**. A study in the orthopedic literature shows that the metrics these devices report often do not correlate with actual sleep quality after joint replacement.²² Worse, if the device gives you a “bad” sleep score, it may actually **increase anxiety and worsen your sleep**.

Once your sleep has **normalized**, you can resume using these devices if you wish, but during the **initial recovery period**, I find they tend to do **more harm than good**. Focus on how you **feel** instead of what the numbers say.

Summing it up: Anxiety is a hidden but powerful cause of sleep disturbance after joint replacement—and you have tools to manage it.

If **anxiety is at the root of your sleep difficulty**, you are not alone. About one-third of patients face this challenge after surgery. The **good news** is that tools like meditation, hypnosis, NSDR, or even binaural beats can **calm your mind and help restore restful sleep**. Therapy may also be helpful, and sometimes **simply removing the stress** of a sleep tracker is enough to break the cycle. **Be kind to yourself during this process** — it will get better with time and attention.

CHAPTER 7: OPTIMIZING CHRONIC HEALTH ISSUES

Another important — and often overlooked — factor in sleep quality after joint replacement is your **overall health**. Chronic medical issues can have a significant impact on how well you sleep, and optimizing those conditions can sometimes make a noticeable difference.

If you have any long-standing conditions involving your **heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, or other organ systems**, it may be time to check in with your primary care physician. Ensuring these are well-managed can support your sleep and help you recover more smoothly from surgery.

The especially important conditions to manage are **obesity, diabetes and sleep apnea**. Let's take a quick look at why these are extra important and what you can do about them.

Obesity and Diabetes

A study on sleep disturbances following joint replacement surgery found that patients with **obesity and diabetes** often have a **harder time regaining high-quality sleep** after surgery.²

If you are struggling with weight or blood sugar control, speak to your doctor about whether you may be a candidate for **some of the newer medications (like Ozempic)** that address both issues simultaneously. Many patients find these options not only help their overall health but also **improve their sleep and energy levels**.

Sleep Apnea and Other Sleep Disorders

If you had **sleep apnea** or another sleep disorder prior to surgery, this could continue to interfere with your sleep afterward.³ This is often also linked to being overweight, and is another area where the newer GLP-1 medications (like Ozempic) **have shown promise** as a tool to improve these chronic conditions and lead to better health and, by extension, **better sleep quality**.²³

If you have been prescribed a **CPAP machine**, make sure you are using it consistently. It's also worth checking in with your doctor to see if any adjustments or additional treatments might be needed. Addressing these pre-existing sleep issues is a key part of **getting your rest back on track after surgery**.

Summing it up: Don't overlook the impact of chronic health issues on sleep —treating the whole body can help you rest and recover.

Just because you're focused on your joint doesn't mean you should neglect the rest of your health. **Obesity, diabetes, sleep apnea, and other chronic conditions can all interfere with sleep quality.** By taking a **holistic approach** and working with your doctor to manage these underlying issues, you may find that your sleep improves — along with your energy, mood, and recovery.

CONCLUSION

Well, there you have it — **every tool, tip, strategy, and resource I could find** to help you get back to sleeping well after your joint replacement.

If you've made it this far, I hope you've already started to see improvement. And if not just yet, please remember this: even when sleep remains difficult despite your best efforts, **the research is clear — these problems improve over time**. The body has an incredible ability to heal, and that includes your sleep cycle.

For most patients, the strategies in this guide are enough to make a **noticeable difference**. My hope is that you've found a few that **resonate with you** and are beginning to feel the benefits.

As you go through the recovery process, try to focus on **sleep quality, not quantity**. You may not sleep for as many hours as you did before surgery, and that's okay. What matters most is that the sleep you are getting is **restful and restorative**. Research shows that **sleep quality is more important than total hours**.²² So instead of chasing a specific number of hours, concentrate on making the hours you do get as effective as possible.

If you're feeling overwhelmed by the volume of information in this guide, I've included **several cheat sheet-style checklists** at the end to make things easier. These quick-reference guides break down the strategies into simple steps you can follow. I encourage you to print them out and keep them by your bedside as a helpful reminder.

In addition to the checklists, you'll also find a **complete list of links to products and medications** mentioned in the book, so you don't have to scroll back to find them. And for those who want to explore the science behind the strategies, I've included a full **reference list of the research articles cited throughout this guide**.

If you found this guide helpful, I'd be truly grateful if you **shared it with others** who may be going through the same thing. The more patients we can help, the better.

And if you're looking for more tips on how to succeed with joint replacement surgery, be sure to check out **The Hip and Knee Replacement Channel** on YouTube at www.youtube.com/@DrKerbel.

My goal is to help **as many people as possible get through joint replacement surgery smoothly** and get back to the life they love. I truly hope this guide brought you one step closer to that.

If there's **anything I can do to support you further** — or if there's a topic you'd like to see covered in a future guide or video — please don't hesitate to reach out. You can leave a comment on one of my videos or email me directly at **thejointsdoc@gmail.com**.

If you found any of the tools in this guide particularly helpful — or unhelpful — I'd love to hear from you. Your feedback will help me make future editions even better, and I always enjoy hearing from patients who are doing well.

Until next time, **be well, sleep well, and I wish you a smooth and easy recovery on your joint replacement journey.**

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dr. Kerbel', with a stylized, cursive-like script.

Dr. Kerbel

Items and Links Mentioned in This Guide

Verilux HappyLight Halo LED Therapy Light Lamp: <https://amzn.to/41dmsvu>



Verilux HappyLight Halo - Cordless LED Light Therapy Lamp with a 360° Magnetic Base & Rechargeable Battery for Portable, UV-Free, Full Spectrum 10,000 LUX Light with Adjustable Brightness and Color

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4.1 ★★★★★ 153 ratings | [Search this page](#)
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Sunrise Alarm Clock: <https://amzn.to/4i5sFiG>



Wake Up Light Sunrise Alarm Clock for Bedroom, with 5W Stereo Bluetooth Speaker, Sunrise Simulation, SleepTimer, Dual Alarms, FM Radio, 17 Colors, 25 Soothing Sounds, Ideal Gift for Baby, Kids, Adults

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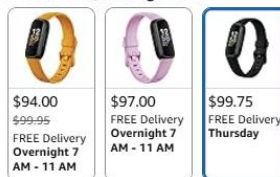
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Color: Black/Midnight Zen



Celestial Seasonings Sleepytime Tea: <https://amzn.to/3Qj0hOb>



Celestial Seasonings Sleepytime Wellness Tea Plus Melatonin, Caffeine Free, 18 Tea Bags Box

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4.7 ★★★★★

2,554 ratings | [Search this page](#)

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One-Time Price: \$4.48

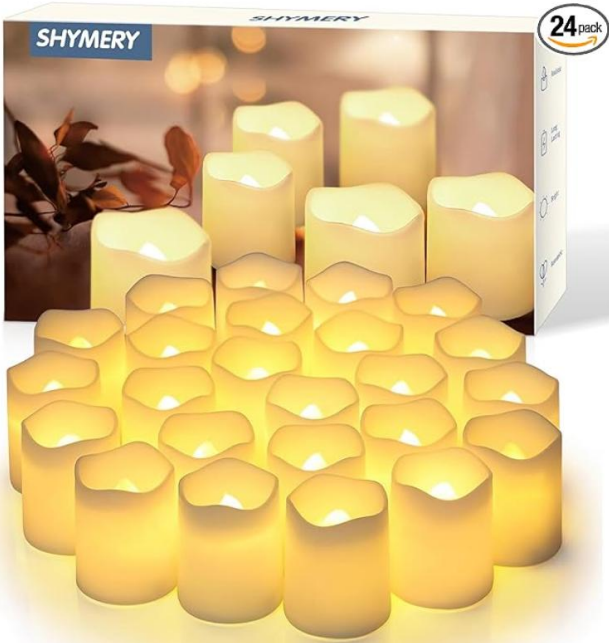
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Flavor Name: Sleepytime Melatonin



Shymery Flameless Electric Candles: <https://amzn.to/4hYRMn4>



SHYMERY Flameless Votive Candles, Flameless Flickering Electric Fake Candle, 24 Pack 200+ Hour Battery Operated LED Tea Lights in Warm White for Wedding, Table, Halloween, Christmas Decorations 1.5"X1.7"

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30-day refund/replacement

Color: Warm White

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NY Times Blackout Curtain Reviews: <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-blackout-curtains/>

Manta Sleep Mask: <https://amzn.to/4gNu7oG>



Manta Sleep Mask - 100% Light Blocking Eye Mask, Adjustable Sleeping Mask with Detachable Eye Cups, Ultra Comfortable for Women & Men, Zero Pressure on Lashes, Perfect for Deep Rest/Travel/Shift Work

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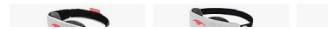
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Eight Sleep Mattress Covers: <http://eightsleep.com>

Ligtease Post Surgery Elevation Pillow: <https://amzn.to/41fGXrm>



LightEase Post-Surgery Leg, Knee, Ankle Elevation Double Wedge Pillow, Memory Foam Leg Elevating Pillow for Injure, Sleeping, Foot Rest, Reduce Swelling

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United Ortho Knee Immobilizer: <https://amzn.to/3EzONLY>



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Style: Immobilizer

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XXL Ice Pack Wrap Around Entire Knee After Surgery, Reusable Gel Large Ice Pack for Knee Injuries, Pain Relief, Swelling, Knee Surgery, Sports Injuries, 1 Pack Blue

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Specific Uses po
For Product
Use for Knee
Age Range Adult

Minupwell Long Knee Pillow for Side Sleepers: <https://amzn.to/40ZGDeP>



MINUPWELL Knee Pillow for Side Sleepers - Between Leg & Under Knee Pillow for Back Sleepers - Leg Pillow with 850G 7D Alternative for Relieving Leg, Back, and Knee Pain - 100% Cotton Fabric - White

Brand: MINUPWELL
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https://youtu.be/KHlbgSN2qAU?si=JHe8ix4uc_TG48sC

Reveri Hypnosis App: <http://www.reveri.com>

Diclofenac Topical Gel: <https://amzn.to/4gGJDCE>



Amazon Basic Care Diclofenac Sodium Topical Gel, 1% (NSAID), for Arthritis Pain Relief, 1.76 ounce (Pack of 1) (Packaging may vary)

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Salonpas Pain Relief Patch, 20 Count (Pack of 1), Up to 12 Hours Temporary Relief of Mild to Moderate Pain, Backache, Sore Muscle, Sprains, Bruises

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Brand Salonpas

Item dimensions 4.33 x 0.79 x 4.72 inches

L x W x H

Product Benefits Pain Relief

Specific Uses For Joint Pain

Magnesium Citrate Capsules: <https://amzn.to/4jQE2gd>



Magnesium Citrate Capsules 180 Capsules (Citrato de Magnesio) 800mg Servings, Vegan Safe, Non-GMO, Gluten Free by Double Wood Supplements

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Style: **Magnesium Citrate**

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FRFF Delivery	FRFF Delivery	FRFF Delivery

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Guided Imagery Sleep Meditation at the Beach Hut: [Guided imagery sleep meditation at the beach hut - YouTube](#)

Guided Meditation Hypnosis for Sleeping: [Fall Asleep In MINUTES! Sleep Talk-Down Guided Meditation Hypnosis for Sleeping - YouTube](#)

Binaural Beats for Sleep: [The DEEPEST Healing Sleep | 3.2Hz Delta Brain Waves | REM Sleep Music - Binaural Beats - YouTube](#)

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Cheat Sheets

Sleep Hygiene

Get light exposure early

View natural sunlight (or a therapy LED light) within 30–60 minutes of waking.

Stick to a consistent wake time

Wake up at the same time every day—even on weekends.

Go to bed when you feel sleepy

Don't fight off sleepiness—listen to your body's natural cues.

Avoid daytime naps

As tempting as it is, daytime naps can interfere with nighttime sleep.

No caffeine or alcohol within 8–10 hours of bedtime

Avoid heavy meals 2–3 hours before bed

Let your stomach settle before lying down.

Have a warm, relaxing drink in the evening

Herbal tea (like Sleepytime) can signal it's time to unwind.

Dim the lights in the evening

Avoid bright or overhead lighting before bed.

Reserve the bedroom for sleep and intimacy only

Don't do exercises, work, or daytime activities in bed.

Block out all light

Use blackout curtains or a well-fitting sleep mask.

Control sound

Use white noise or earplugs to eliminate distractions.

No screens 1 hour before bed

Phones, tablets, and TVs can disrupt your circadian rhythm.

Can't resist scrolling? Remove your phone from the room

Make your sleep space relaxing and comfortable

Upgrade your bedding or add calming touches like scent or softness.

Keep the room cool and layer your blankets

Temperature regulation is key to staying asleep.

Avoid sleep tracking devices during recovery

Trackers like Fitbit, Apple Watch, Oura, or Whoop may increase anxiety without helping.

Making Sleep Comfortable

Test your leg position

Try sleeping with your leg straight vs. slightly bent to see which feels best.

Elevate your legs

Use a wedge or firm pillow to elevate your legs comfortably.

Support your lower back

Try a small pillow or yoga bolster under your low back for added support.

Try a brace if your leg prefers to stay straight

If it helps, use a stabilizing brace to prevent your leg from bending at night.

Use cold therapy

Ice your leg with a flexible cold pack or a cryotherapy machine—just make sure to use a barrier to protect your skin.

Sleep on your non-operative side

If you're a side sleeper, lie on the side of your “good” knee for better comfort.

Use a full-length pillow between your legs

Choose one that supports from knee to ankle—not just the thigh.

Relieve restless legs with gentle movement

Try 5 minutes of light pedaling on a stationary bike (no resistance) or use a legs-up-the-wall stretch before bed.

Getting Back to Sleep in the Middle of the Night

Keep pain medication and water by your bedside

Take it right away if pain wakes you—without having to fully get up.

Do light leg movements

A few ankle pumps or knee press-downs can calm restless legs and get blood flowing.

Have a recliner nearby

If you can't get comfortable in bed, move to the chair quickly and try to fall back asleep there.

Use a relaxation tool

Have a guided meditation, imagery, hypnosis session, or NSDR audio ready to help settle your mind and ease you back into sleep.

Getting Pain Under Control at Night

Stay ahead of your pain

Don't wait until your pain gets severe—manage it early to prevent sleep disruption.

Keep pain meds and water by your bed

If you wake up in pain, take your medication right away without needing to get up fully.

Use narcotics sparingly at night

If possible, try non-narcotic options to minimize sleep disruption and side effects.

Stagger your medications

Avoid taking all your pain meds at once—spread them out to prevent long gaps with no relief.

Apply topical pain relief

Use diclofenac gel or over-the-counter pain patches directly on the painful area.

Treat burning or nerve pain directly

Ask your doctor about medications like Gabapentin or Lyrica if you're experiencing burning sensations in your legs or feet.

Tackling General Insomnia

Check your gut

Constipation from pain meds is common after surgery and may be keeping you up. Treat it if needed.

Try melatonin or OTC herbal supplements

These are safe and non-habit forming for most patients.

Avoid Benadryl if possible

It can cause dangerous fogginess that can lead to delirium and falls, especially in older adults or when taken with other sedating medications.

Talk to your doctor about other medication options

Medications like duloxetine or trazodone may help, but should only be used under medical supervision.

Use prescription sleep meds like Ambien only as a last resort

These should be used as the absolute last option if you're under 65 and other strategies haven't worked.

Ask your doctor about cannabinoid options

CBD or THC may help some patients sleep, but must be used cautiously and legally.

Medical Disclaimer

This guide is intended for **educational and informational purposes only** and should **not be considered medical advice**. While I've done my best to compile accurate, useful, and research-backed information, **every patient is different**, and your situation may require a different approach.

This guide is **not a substitute for personalized care** from your doctor or healthcare provider. If you're considering trying any new treatments, medications, supplements, or recovery strategies discussed here, please **consult your physician first**.

I've written this guide to help support you in your recovery—not to replace the expertise of your medical team. I can't take responsibility for any outcomes, injuries, or complications that may result from applying this information without medical supervision.

By using this guide, you understand that you're doing so at your own discretion and agree to use your judgment—and that of your doctor—when making medical decisions.

As always, **your safety, health, and recovery come first**.

Affiliate Disclaimer

Some of the links included in this guide are affiliate links, which means I may earn a small commission if you choose to purchase through them. This comes at **no additional cost to you**. Any earnings from these links go directly toward supporting my **YouTube channel and educational resources**, so I can continue creating helpful content for joint replacement patients like you.

That said, the purpose of including these links is **not to sell products or generate income**, but to make your recovery easier. Every product mentioned in this guide has been selected based on **real feedback from patients, input from fellow clinicians**, or my own **research into the most useful and practical tools** available. I've done my best to recommend only items that I believe can genuinely help you rest, recover, and feel better.

If you'd rather not use the links, I completely understand. For your convenience, I've included the **name and picture of each product** so you can easily search for it yourself without clicking any links at all. The most important thing is that you find what works for you.

My goal in writing this guide has always been to provide you with **clear, trustworthy, and actionable advice** to help you get through this tough stretch and get back to sleeping—and living—well.

Thank you for being here, and I'm truly honored to be part of your recovery journey.