

# WATCH YOUR BACK



Dr. Stein stands 7'2". If anyone should relate to the physical problems that arise from being tall, the good doctor would be the one.

To reach Dr. Stein, or learn more about his practice and the Gonstead Technique, visit his web site at [72doc.com](http://72doc.com). You can also e-mail him at [drstein@tallmagazine.com](mailto:drstein@tallmagazine.com).

## WHERE TO BUY A GOOD NIGHT'S REST:

- Tall Paul's Tall Mall: [TallPaulsTallMall.com](http://TallPaulsTallMall.com)  
Paul has mattresses and beds up to 96" long.  
Ultra King: [UltraKing.com](http://UltraKing.com)  
Their Extreme Ultra King measures 12' x 10'.  
Select Comfort: [SelectComfort.com](http://SelectComfort.com)  
The Grand King bed measures 80" x 98".
- This company supports TALL magazine (so please support them).

## SLEEPING 101

**Q:** I am 6'6" and own my own business (carpet-cleaning). As you can imagine, I come home most nights beat-tired and ready for bed. The problems begin once I get into bed: My back starts hurting, and I have been having a hard time falling asleep at night.

My wife thinks it might be time to get a new mattress (this one is close to 10 years old), but I'm wondering if that's only part of the problem. What can I do to give my back a good night's sleep?

**A** There are many different routes to a bad night's sleep. Let's go over some of the most common ones.

**Is soft or firm better?** There is a myth that the harder the mattress, the better it must be for your lower back. Not true. Research printed in the medical journal *The Lancet* showed that after 90 days, 95 percent of subjects tested preferred a medium-firm mattresses over firm ones. These subjects not only experienced less lower-back pain during the day, but also while lying in bed and getting up.

**Fun with feathers.** Feather, or "down-filled," mattresses often the softest landing for your spine. Be careful: individuals can experience harsh allergic reactions to the feathers (you can wake up with your head the size of a beach ball). Best bet: invest in a down-filled pillow first and see what happens.

**Buying used or new.** Try to buy a new mattresses if at all possible, and avoid buying a used one (or being forced by the salesperson to purchase a "slightly-used" version). By all means, try it out in the store, but think of this: you've been walking all day from store to store checking out mattresses, lying down will feel great no matter what mattresses it is. The real test comes ones you sleep on it for a few weeks.

**Replace when worn out.** A mattress should be replaced every eight to 10 years. Make sure to flip it

over from time to time, unless the tag on the mattress tells you specifically not to. (Don't remove the tag, or the Mattress Police will send you to jail!)

**Size does matter.** Vertically blessed individuals need the right size bed: Queen beds are 80" x 60", Kings are 80" x 76", and California Kings are 84" x 72".

You now have the perfect bed. Here are some suggestions to help you enjoy your time in it better.

**Turn on the heat.** I don't usually recommend heat for back pains, but a hot shower or bath will relax you and help you sleep better.

**Nibbling.** Don't eat right before going to bed.

**Outside stimulation.** Avoid caffeine before going to bed. A lot of pain relievers and other medication has caffeine as a major ingredient, so read those labels.

**The rhythm method.** Try to keep the same sleeping rhythm every day by going to bed and waking up at the same times, even on weekends.

**Fun with blinders.** Invest in some high-quality blinds that completely darken your bedroom.

**Avoid interruptions.** Have a dictating machine next to your bed for those important ideas that pop into your head while you are trying to fall asleep.

**Late-night runs.** If you find yourself getting up several times a night to go to the WC, decrease the amount of fluids you drink right before bed. If you are a male, get your prostate checked. Prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate) prevents your bladder from emptying completely, causing those late-night calls of nature.

**Position is everything.** It's best to sleep on your back or on your side, but not on your stomach, as doing so puts your neck into an unnatural position. If you sleep on your side, place a small pillow between your knees to prevent rotating your pelvis at night.

Sweet dreams!