

In A Nutshell  
December 2022  
Sleep

I chose the topic of sleep for this month's article because I only slept 3 ½ hours last night. I got into bed around 9:30 and according to my Fitbit I did not fall asleep until 2:15 am. Boy, that was accurate. I am wondering why I couldn't get to sleep. Here are some reasons:

Sleeping difficulties are thought to arise either from the damage to myelin (the protective layer of nerve cell axons) and to brain regions that control sleep, or from physical pain, spasticity (muscular stiffness and contractions), medication effects, bladder problems, or psychological factors including depression and anxiety.

Fatigue affects up to 90% of people with MS, and in 40% of those people, fatigue is reported as the worst symptom. There is a difference between being sleepy and being fatigued. Sleepiness is when you get drowsy, when your eyelids are starting to close. Fatigue is like there's 400 pounds hanging off your body, but your mind is still running.

One article said that naps should be avoided or limited to 30 minutes. The more you sleep during the day, the more it's going to take away from your sleep at night.

if you're struggling with sleep and it's related to insomnia, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) interventions are the gold standard. CBT-I techniques include stimulus control, restrictions on time spent in bed, education on sleep hygiene and cognitive strategies, and relaxation techniques to help patients to improve their sleep quality.

If there are some other MS-related symptoms — spasms, plasticity, those kinds of things — then medications can be used to manage that problem right away.

You should also consider a sleep study with a doctor who specializes in sleep issues. There are several in and around The Villages. A sleep doctor may discover that your MS is causing sleep apnea. Sleep apnea occurs when you are not getting enough air and your sleep is interrupted as a result. They may conduct a sleep test where you are monitored as you sleep. Many patients are prescribed a CPAP machine to help their breathing while they sleep.

[Insomnia and Fatigue in MS Lessen Using 'Talk' Therapy, Trial Suggests \(multiplesclerosisnewstoday.com\)](https://multiplesclerosisnewstoday.com)

[Expert Voices: How to Sleep Well With Multiple Sclerosis | Combating Insomnia, Poor Sleep Can Help With Fatigue for Those With MS | Multiple Sclerosis News Today](#)

[Sleep Apnea article by the Mayo Clinic](#)

### Just For Fun

One of the best things you can do to regulate your sleep cycle and circadian rhythm is wake up and get out of bed the same time every day.

We want to use our bed for sleep and intimacy only, so if you're not sleeping you should actually get out of bed and do something rather boring.

Can you think of something boring to do the next time you can't

Sleep? I can think of many—reading magazine articles on fly fishing or bird watching (my apologies to the Birders out there), dusting, balancing the checkbook (oh no, that might get my heart racing)—I think you get the picture. Now I am going to take a 25 minute nap and see what happens.

“Merry Christmas to all and to all a Good Night!”

*Wishing you all Happy Holidays and a Healthy  
New Year*



*Karen*