

# HAVING TROUBLE SLEEPING AFTER COVID-19?



LONG COVID ESSENTIALS: A SERIES BY The Sick Times × LONG COVID JUSTICE

Having trouble falling or staying asleep after COVID-19? Do you still feel tired when you wake up? You're not alone. As many as four in five people with Long COVID experience sleep disturbances.

These issues most often include:

- Trouble falling asleep (insomnia)
- Restless, unrefreshing, or non-restorative sleep
- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- The feeling of “restless legs”
- Involuntary muscle contractions or jolts when falling asleep, called “hypnic jerks”
- A condition called obstructive [sleep apnea](#) - in which your throat muscles relax and partly block your airway during sleep

Several practices known as *sleep hygiene* help your body establish a routine that supports your natural circadian rhythm. [Popular tips](#) you might have run across include: setting a consistent sleep time, wake time, and wind-down practice; getting bright light in the morning and avoiding it at night; reducing screen-time before bed; and keeping your bedroom as cool, dark, and quiet as possible.

Some supplements to consider (but watch for such side effects as increased brain fog):

- Regular melatonin use can help, especially with insomnia.
- Magnesium supplements can help with restless legs and muscle contractions.
- If cannabis-based products are available, some small studies suggest they may help with insomnia.

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If sleep hygiene practices and natural supplements do not help your sleep issues, it's time to see a medical provider.

Be sure to ask whether any other conditions associated with Long COVID might be affecting your sleep. Managing other issues like pain, mast cell activation syndrome (MCAS), dysautonomia, and others can often improve sleep. Your provider may recommend a sleep study to identify other treatable problems.

If more active management is needed, there are medications you can discuss with your provider.

## \* RESOURCES

- Two clinicians at the Royal Holloway University of London (Jan 2023) wrote a [concise summary of the challenges of sleep in Long COVID and the ways in which they can be addressed](#)
- The ME Association has a free [sleep management e-book on Long Covid and ME/CFS](#)
- A private clinic, Mamedica, gives an [overview of cannabis-based treatments for Long COVID symptoms](#)
- Guezguez et al. (Feb 2023) published a [detailed clinical overview of current management practices](#)

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\* **QUESTIONS?** [connect@s4hi.org](mailto:connect@s4hi.org)

*This series was designed by people living with Long COVID and associated diseases. Each resource sheet has been reviewed by patient and medical experts. This is an informational resource, not medical advice. Publication date: 9/16/2024.*