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Sleep Cures from Mother Nature

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The Pillow of Your Dreams

To avoid back or neck pain, elevate your head only one pillow high. "You want a pillow firm enough to hold your head and neck in alignment with your spine, just as they would be if you were standing up," says Jeffrey Goldstein, MD, director of Spine Service at the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases.

Feathers, Fiberfill, or Foam?

Feathers Down, the fluffy undercoat of a goose or duck, is the softest, most expensive filling. For more support, choose a mixture of down and feathers or all feathers (firmest). Goose feathers are almost as fluffy as down, with curved quills that add spring. Duck feathers cost less but are less buoyant.

Fiberfill This polyester product is soft, pliant, and moderately priced but may lump during laundering.

Foam This makes the firmest pillow and comes in various shapes, including contoured to cradle your head and neck. "Memory" foam molds itself to the shape of your head for extra comfort.

A Note About Allergies

"Hypoallergenic" synthetic pillows may not be the best choice -- unless you're allergic to feathers. British studies show feather pillows offer notably better protection from dust mites and pet allergens than synthetics do.

Firm or Soft? Depends on Your Sleeping Position

Back Sleeper Medium-firm pillows bolster your neck without flexing your head forward.

Side Thick, firm pillows give the best support.

Stomach Softer, flatter pillows prevent neck strain.

Pillows for Special Situations

Heartburn Wedge-shape slanted cushions raise the esophagus higher than the stomach, preventing the upward flow of stomach acid that causes this problem when you lie flat. **Hot Flashes** Choose a pillow that dispels heat; these brands usually have *cool* or *chill* in the name.

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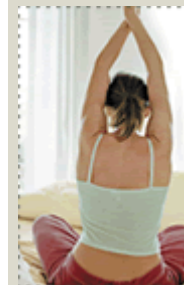
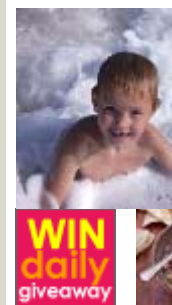
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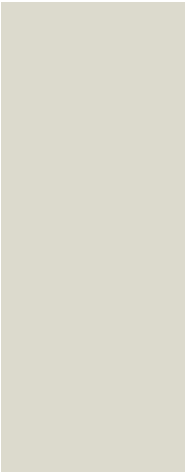
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