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5 Ways to Live With Your CPAP Machine

Adjusting to CPAP can help people with sleep apnea sleep better. Here's how to do it.

By [Kathleen Doheny](#)

Reviewed by [Louise Chang, MD](#)

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Your doctor has told you that you need to use a Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machine while you're sleeping to treat your **obstructive sleep apnea**. If you're like most people who receive this news, you've got mixed feelings about it.

"Most people are not thrilled," says Meir Kryger, MD, director of **sleep** medicine research and education at Gaylord Hospital in Wallingford, Conn., and a researcher for Respiromics and ResMed, which develop and manufacture **sleep apnea** devices. "Some are relieved there is a treatment for what they have."

Sleep apnea is marked by brief but repeated interruptions in breathing during **sleep**. The **CPAP** typically includes a face or nasal mask that pumps a flow of air into the nasal passages to keep the airway open. But some people abandon the machine before they can get used to it. In a study of 639 people published in 2010, 19% had stopped using the machine after four years and 30% had stopped within 10 years.

But adjusting to CPAP can make your **sleep** -- and life -- better, especially if you have severe **sleep apnea**. Read on to get sleep specialists' top five tips on how you can make peace with the device.

Focus on the Health Benefits of CPAP

To help people stay focused on the big picture, Nancy Collop, MD, president-elect of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and professor of medicine at Emory University School of Medicine, explains what is happening in your body.

"Your body is in this constant struggle at night between breathing and sleeping," says Collop, who also directs the university sleep center. "Fortunately, breathing wins, but it wins at the expense of your sleep."

Lack of sleep causes daytime sleepiness, which can make it difficult to function at work and elsewhere. But lost sleep can also have an adverse effect on aging,

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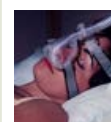
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diabetes, and blood pressure.

The purpose of the CPAP is to take away the struggle between breathing and sleep. And the majority of CPAP users report immediate symptom relief, according to the National Sleep Foundation. They also report increased energy and better mental alertness during the day.

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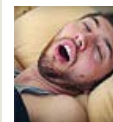
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