



ADHD & ADD Sleeplessness, Panic in Adults by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Q: I am an adult with ADHD. I never can seem to slow down. I don't sleep well, I also forget a lot, and am having panic attacks. I am in constant muscular pain too. Are these stress related?

A: What you ask is actually a multi-faceted question. I am not a medical professional so you would be best advised by a physician, but in my own work in stress-management, I do notice that most adults simply do not get enough sleep. We are busy, busy, busy, and sleep is the first thing to go. Many people under stress suffer from sleep deprivation. Some symptoms of the absence of deep, restorative sleep include:

- depression
- fatigue
- aches (muscle/joint pain)
- irritability
- clouded thinking
- poor memory
- slower reflexes
- headache
- decreased work performance
- strained relationships
- short temper/impatience

It is important to address the frustrating sleeplessness that often underlies fatigue, malaise, depression and chronic pain. Interestingly, people diagnosed with Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) often experience many of the same symptoms and suffer terribly from chronic aches, migratory pain, "Fibro-fog," digestive problems and depression. FMS is thought by some physicians to be associated with a sleep disorder in which Alpha brain activity interferes with deep restorative sleep and the process of routine tissue repair, among other things. While this may not pertain to you, it would be worth a visit to a specialist in sleep disorders, and doing some reading about how sleep deprivation might be impacting your central nervous system and other mind-body processes. It could be that by addressing your fundamental need for good sleep, some other things will fall into place. In my free e-Newsletter, I sometimes address ways to get better sleep, so you might want to subscribe at www.relaxintuit.com/

Assuming you have been formally diagnosed with ADHD, (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) by a physician, if you are taking medication for the ADHD, ask if that could possibly impact your sleep and/or anxiety or muscle pain. You don't mention your age or gender, but there could perhaps be hormonal activity in the mix for women who are either pre-menstrual or for women in their 40's and 50's, when all kinds of systemic changes occur.

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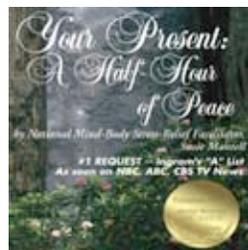
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by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Many men also experience sleep changes as they age as well. Check with your doctor if that might be a factor. Panic attacks can be extremely disturbing, but many who have experienced such episodes find self-soothing stress-management tools such as meditation, breathing techniques, massage, yoga, psychotherapy plus healthy diet and exercise programs can prevent and diminish the attacks. Unfortunately, the "fear of the fear"...the anxiety that one *might* have another panic attack, can itself be paralyzing. Skilled, compassionate professional counseling can help us to discover emotional issues that may be underlying episodes of panic, to work them through in meaningful ways and even to eliminate them altogether. In some cases, short-term sleep medication may be appropriate, though there are many medical and psychological questions to be asked by a trusted physician before that determination is made.

A Word to the Wise: This should also be reevaluated regularly to wean off sleep medication as soon as it is appropriate. People can get into serious trouble self-medicating, over-medicating or using alcohol to treat symptoms of pain, panic or sleeplessness.

Finally, your body is talking to you. Listen carefully. Journal the timing of episodes and what preceded them. What was on your mind that day or the day before? What was coming up soon thereafter? How was your emotional state prior? How did you sleep the few nights before? What you are eating, drinking (*e.g. chocolate or caffeine*) that might compromise sleep. What were you reading or watching on TV? Are you worried about something? Addressing these underlying issues is always essential and can relieve many symptoms, allowing us to enjoy the deep, restful sleep we long for.

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