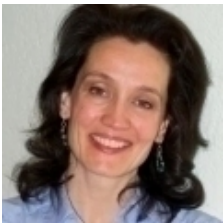


# Tips for those living with restless leg syndrome

By Mandy Kendall

There is a very prevalent condition that affects an estimated 10 percent of the population and, for a change, its name actually describes what it does. Restless leg syndrome is a condition with an unknown cause and currently is without a known cure.

Symptoms reported by sufferers are generally very similar; an irresistible urge to move the legs, mainly when sitting or lying, usually improving with movement or walking and getting worse in the evening or at bedtime. There is often also an aching sensation to the legs, or even a creepy-crawly sensation experienced when sitting for prolonged periods of time – a miserable situation to be in.



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As for what causes RLS, there doesn't appear to be any definitive documented causes, but there are many theories put forward by health professionals.

There are theories that the central nervous system plays a part in RLS, especially the dopamine neurotransmitter system. RLS symptoms have been shown to respond well to medications that improve dopamine neurotransmission within the central nervous system. However, there are also medications that have

been linked with causing RLS, including antidepressants, so professional advice should be sought before considering taking medication for the relief of RLS.

Studies have shown that iron deficiency can also be a major contributor to RLS and treating sufferers with supplemental iron has been shown to be an effective method of improving symptoms. There is some literature to suggest that being deficient in some of the B vitamins and magnesium might trigger limb movements, so exploring these questions with your doctor and taking the appropriate supplements might be helpful.

All of the symptoms associated with RLS will often disturb sleep, making RLS one of the most health disruptive of the non life-threatening conditions. RLS is also often reported more frequently by those suffering with kidney disease and diabetes, and they often report that symptoms increase during times of stress.

While there is no known cure for RLS some lifestyle changes have been shown to reduce symptoms for some sufferers.

So what can you do about RLS? Here are some *Qwik-e tips* that may help minimize the effects and symptoms.

**Sleep tactics** – Avoid chronic sleep deprivation by trying to maximize total sleep time.

**Exercise** – Avoid exercising too close to bedtime, but try having a regular exercise program to keep circulation at optimal levels.

**Caffeine/alcohol** – Avoid caffeine (which can sometimes trigger symptoms late in the day), and alcohol near bedtime.

**Blood tests** – Have iron and vitamin levels checked with a blood test and take advice from a professional on possible supplementation requirements.

**Stress** – Use breathing or relaxation techniques to help reduce the physical side effects of stress on the body.

As always, the *Health Connective Qwik-e* articles are for information only and are not meant to serve as any form of diagnosis or treatment plan. Any readers of *Health Connective* articles should contact their healthcare provider for further information and treatment.

*Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at [connect@healthconnective.com](mailto:connect@healthconnective.com) or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.*