

How to Sleep With Two Dogs

I will address myself mostly to the rules for sleeping with two dogs. For the few who have already mastered this technique, I will later add a cat, although I urge beginners to leave the cat out.

To achieve any sort of success, certain arbitrary conditions must be assumed, the first one being that you must have a king-sized bed. There is no point in lying down in anything smaller. While the size of the breed of dog is not important (people who sleep with dogs know that, before the night is over, everybody collects into a pile), the condition of the dogs may be. Very thin dogs, for example, are lumpier.

I have selected the two-dog minimum because, as we shall see, it is the only way to stay in bed at all. The key word here is LEVERAGE. All dogs spend the night pressed tightly against their human bedfellows, but no two dogs ever sleep on the same side. This is, in part, an expression of the "Let Sleeping Dogs Lie Principle." It is also to create Leverage.

Because the human being is always in the middle, held tightly in place by the dogs and by a blanket (which the dogs are sleeping on top of), restlessness and recurring cramps are difficult to handle. Here is the tip: When you first lie down, **AND BEFORE THE DOGS SETTLE AGAINST EACH SIDE OF YOU**, spread your legs three inches apart. Stiffen and hold out **NO MATTER HOW GREAT THE PRESSURE!** When the time comes to turn over, bring the legs together quickly under the now slightly slackened blanket and revolve **BEFORE THE DOGS WAKE UP**. As soon as you have assumed a new position, allow for those crucial three inches again, otherwise you're a mummy for the rest of the night.

NEVER SPREAD THE LEGS MORE THAN THREE INCHES. A dog's favorite place to sleep is in the hollow created by legs too widely spread, and once settled, he and you are frozen into position until morning. (There is a way out of this trap, but it is difficult to describe without slides.) Dogs who prefer to sleep on their backs **MUST BE GIVEN SPACE THREE TIMES THE HEIGHT OF THE DOG AT THE SHOULDER.** Dogs who like pillows may be accommodated if you sleep on your side with the legs scissored so that each dog has an ankle for a chin rest. Above all, **BEWARE OF CURLING.** When the curl is reversed, both dogs are dislocated, resulting in low growls on both sides of you.

When you are ready to add a cat, position is all important. All cats prefer to sleep in hollows, but **NO CAT WILL SLEEP ON THE SAME SIDE AS A DOG.** (Remember, you have only two sides.) **YOU MUST, THEREFORE, BECOME A TRIANGLE!** Do this by assuming a horizontal diver's crouch, thereby creating not only three more-or-less exclusive sides, but two hollows as well. With one dog at your front, and the other against your back, the cat can curl into the hollow at the back of your bent knees, separated from both dogs. All will then sleep soundly.

This entire technique still needs a lot of refinement. A method that deals with early morning scratching needs to be developed, and the problem of pretending to sleep while being closely scrutinized by various animals needs to be solved.

- By Bev Ryba