



## My Partner Snores! What Can We Do About It?

While it's often the butt of jokes and general amusement, snoring can be a real problem for some couples. It causes disruptive sleep patterns and can have a huge impact on relationships.

If it's an occasional problem, then you can manage to live with it. We've all been guilty at one time or another.

But if your partner is snoring almost every night it can begin to influence your health and wellbeing as well as theirs. Here we take a quick look at the different ways you can try to solve this problem and both get a better night's sleep.

## Snoring Facts

- Snoring is commonplace. **57% of men suffer from it and 40% of women.**
- In the UK alone, there are thought to be some 15 million regular snorers and many of these have partners.
- According to **legal firm Watkins and Gunn**, snoring is the second most commonly cited '*unreasonable behaviour*' when a partner is seeking a divorce.
- While there may be physiological or anatomical reasons why one person snores more than another, the most common causes are ageing, being overweight, drinking alcohol and taking sedatives.

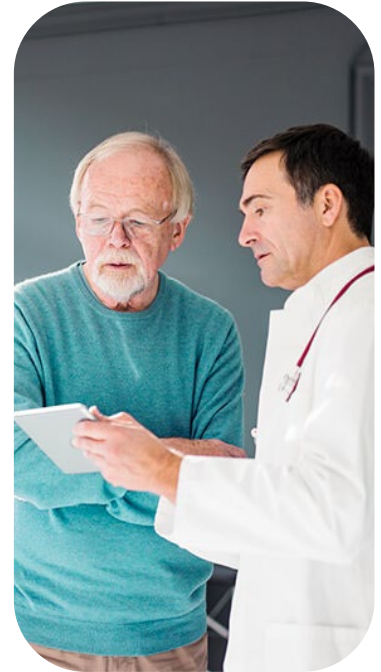
## Get a Proper Diagnosis

If your partner is regularly snoring, however it affects you personally, it pays to have the problem investigated. A doctor can look at your partner's lifestyle and physically examine them and recommend tests if need be.

For example, a medical issue like obstructive sleep apnoea is a common condition where the throat and airway relax and narrow during sleep and this causes an interruption to normal breathing. There are remedies for this including wearing a CPAP or continuous positive airway pressure device.

In some cases, there may be an anatomical reason why your partner snores, including having a long soft palate (the back part of the roof of the mouth) and enlarged tonsils. Something like a deviated septum in the nose, though not as common, can also cause snoring.

Your doctor may also be able to identify other lifestyle factors that may be responsible for excessive snoring and what you can do about these.



## Lifestyle Changes

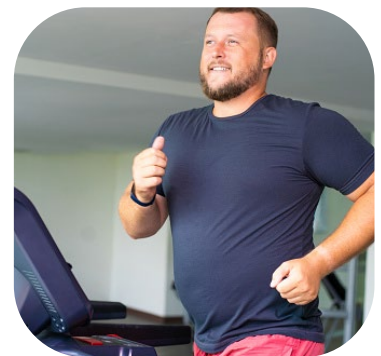
For many people, the causes of snoring can, at least in part, be affected by their lifestyle. If someone is overweight or drinks alcohol regularly, they tend to snore more.

Not all of the following may apply to your partner but if so, they are worth addressing with more seriousness and making the appropriate changes:

### 1. Being Overweight

If your partner is carrying some extra weight, this can cause additional fatty tissue to aggregate around the neck and throat and reduce airflow, something that commonly leads to problems such as snoring.

Losing weight isn't just good for stopping snoring, of course, and has lots of other well-being benefits. Including exercise in your partner's daily routine can ensure they have a deeper and quieter night's sleep and you get some well-earned rest too.



### 2. Alcohol

If your partner regularly drinks, you'll probably find that their snoring gets much worse after they've had a pint or two. Alcohol, especially when consumed close to bedtime, relaxes the throat muscles and narrows the airway making it more likely they will snore.

You may find that if your partner reduces their alcohol intake, they'll have a more restful and less disruptive night's sleep.

Incidentally, smoking can also contribute to snoring and, with all its other health implications, it's worth giving up.



### 3. Back Sleeping

Around 10% of people prefer to sleep on their backs and this can make snoring more likely. That's because gravity takes effect and pulls the soft tissue of your throat down, again narrowing the airways and making breathing more difficult. If you have a high pillow it can also push your jaw down and close the air passage.

Most people have a particular way of sleeping, either on the side or on the back, that is comfortable for them and which they are used to. That can mean changing positions is difficult but it's worth trying and persisting with if there is a snoring problem.



### 4. Reduce Stress

If we're stressed out our body can release all sorts of hormones that impact our sleep patterns. Stressful lives are also associated with bad lifestyle habits such as drinking too much, smoking and overeating or eating the wrong type of foods, which all have a role to play in snoring problems.



**[Check out these 10 ways to decrease stress in your life from the NHS.](#)**

## Managing Your Environment

While many of us take snoring for granted, looking at your sleep environment can make a big difference to your partner and it's a good idea to experiment and find what works for you both. This includes:

### 1. Have a Set Sleeping Routine

With our busy lives, we tend to have rather disorganised sleep routines. Ideally, if you want to train your body for a restful night, you need to go to bed at the same time every evening.

- Don't take your digital devices to bed with you, turn them off at least a half hour before you go to bed.
- Having a warm shower or bath before you go to bed can help you both relax.
- Have good curtains that block out the light – the darker the room, the better you'll sleep.
- Try some breathing meditation before you lie down to rest as this can encourage deeper sleep.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine at least six hours before you go to bed.



**[Check out this guide to a better sleep routine from the Sleep Foundation.](#)**

## 2. Open Your Room to Fresh Air

There is some anecdotal evidence from snorers themselves that they have less of a problem in cooler bedrooms than in hotter ones. It's worth trying this and looking at your bedding to make sure you and your partner don't get overly warm at night.

It's also a good idea to have some fresh air flowing in the room. This could mean opening a window at night though this isn't always practical. Other options include adding high oxygen plants like aloe vera to your bedroom or investing in an air purifier.



## 3. Check Out Your Bed and Pillow

Many a good night's sleep has been scuppered by an old mattress or a pillow that has long ago lost its shape. Ideally, you should change your mattress every 6 to 8 years and you should invest in a good one, even if it costs a little extra.

Almost as important, however, are your pillows. When your partner sleeps, you want their head and neck to be aligned and not tilting, something that can close off the airways and cause snoring. The good news is that there are anti-snoring pillows out there that are generally firmer and help maintain this alignment.



# Things You Can Do

The onus isn't always on your partner and there may be things you can do if, for example, they only snore at certain times. Here are just a few:

### 1. Sleep in Another Room

It can seem antisocial, but it may be the only option at night if you want to get some decent sleep. It's not always possible if you live in a one-bedroom flat or practical if the walls connecting the next room are too thin.

A survey of 1,000 people by [Mattress Online](#) found that just over half of couples will sleep in the spare room to get a better night's sleep. As a short-term solution, it's probably the best you'll find.

### 2. Wear Earbuds

The traditional earbud is greatly underrated when it comes to blocking out sound and can work if you have a gentle snoring problem. For louder partners, you may want to consider earbuds that produce white noise.

### 3. Move Your Partner

The default behaviour when a partner starts to snore is either to pinch their nose or turn them over. The latter generally works better and can help clear the airway and tone that annoying snoring down, at least for a little while.

### 4. Sleep and Anti-snoring Aids

There are numerous different sleep aids on the market nowadays and these can be a low-cost solution to your partner's snoring problem. Here are just a few aids to consider:

## a) Biofeedback Apps

While not strictly a sleep aid, this can give your partner a good idea of what the problem is. Many people refuse to admit that they snore at all and it can be quite a job convincing them.

Unfortunately, women are less likely to admit to a snoring problem than men.

According to [a recent study in the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine:](#)

“ In a population of individuals referred to a PSG study, although no difference in snoring intensity was found between sexes, women tend to underreport the fact that they snore and to underestimate the loudness of their snoring.



A sleep/snore app records the individual through their phone during the night and produces a graph of when they are having disruptive sleep. Of course, if your partner is snoring loudly, you can just as easily press the record button on your mobile and play it back to them in the morning.

A sleep biofeedback app can also give someone a good idea of how a particular solution is working for them and allow them to figure out when snoring is to be more likely, for example, when they have had a drink or two before bed.

## b) Nasal Strips and Dilators

Nasal strips and dilators have become quite popular in the world of sports and athletics. They are small sticky strips that fit across the bridge of the nose and help open up the airways, getting more oxygen to the lungs.

They can also work if you have a snoring problem and have the advantage that, after a short while, you hardly notice them.



## c) Mouth Guards

These work a bit like a traditional gum shield but their role is to push the lower jaw slightly forward so that it opens the airways and allows better breathing. They are generally made from medical-grade thermoplastic and have a flexible framework that can be adjusted to fit your mouth quite comfortably.

While they can work for some people, they do take a bit of getting used to and it may take several nights before you can sleep effectively.



## d) Chin Straps

One of the problems for consistent snorers is that they tend to breathe through the mouth when they sleep. Ideally, you want to be breathing through the nose – it's healthier for a start.

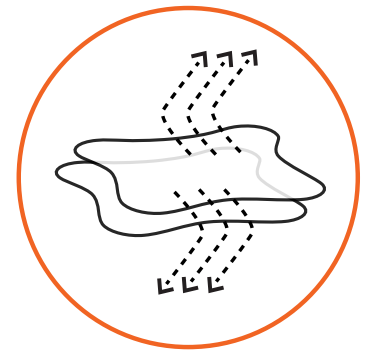
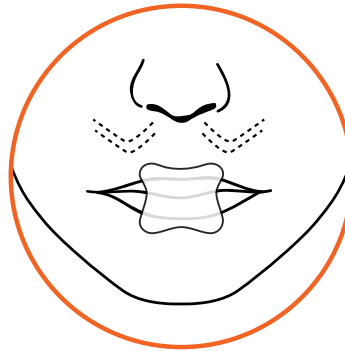
A chin strap is a relatively simple device that attaches around the head and jaw and aims to keep the mouth closed so that you are forced to breathe through the nose.



#### d) Mouth Patches

Another option and less uncomfortable is a mouth patch. This uses adhesive to attach a small, butterfly-shaped piece of tape around the mouth and keep it gently closed. A [study on subjects who suffered from mild sleep apnoea](#) found that wearing an oral patch during sleep significantly reduced snoring.

[Devices such as the SnorePatch](#) not only help cut down snoring by changing the alignment of the face and getting people to breathe through their nose but also improves oxygen uptake and can help with a better night's sleep.



### Summary

Our advice if you have a partner who snores is not to suffer in silence. There are plenty of changes that you can help them make – not all of them will work and every person is different, but it's important to try.

Whether it's diet or investing in a simple but effective product like the SnorePatch, there's a lot that can be done to make a difference to your sleep quality and theirs.