



Nine Curious Ways to Stop Snoring

Surprising techniques for reducing night-time noise pollution.

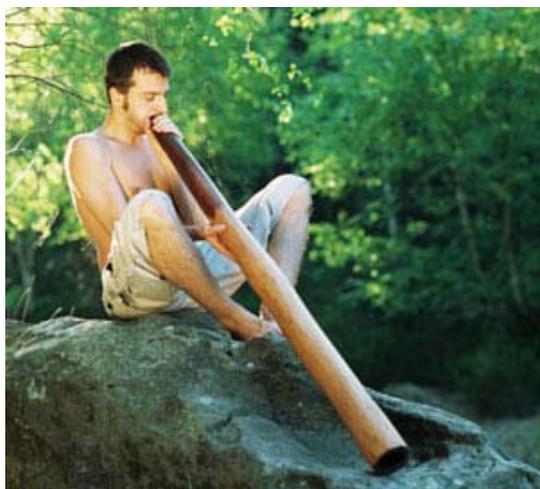


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By Laurie Pawlik-Kienlen for MSN Health & Fitness

1. Tighten your Zzoma

This belt-like device is worn around the chest area during sleep; its firm foam material gently forces you to slumber on your side, which helps prevent snoring. "Most people snore on their back, and 30 to 40 percent of the general population snores on a regular basis," says Samuel Krachman, M.D., professor of medicine and director of the Sleep Disorders Center at Temple University. His research shows that the [Zzoma](#) reduces episodes of abnormal breathing due to positional sleep apnea (which occurs when you temporarily stop breathing while sleeping on your back). Untreated, sleep apnea is a risk factor for high blood pressure, coronary disease and [heart failure](#).

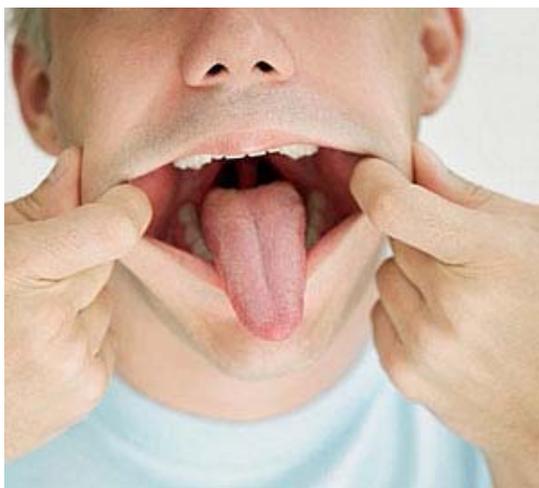


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2. Play the didgeridoo

A study from the University of Zurich showed that regularly playing this Aboriginal wind instrument reduced [daytime sleepiness](#) and nighttime [snoring](#) in people with moderate [sleep apnea](#). "The effects of the didgeridoo are similar to singing," says Joanne Getsy, M.D., medical director of the Drexel Sleep Center in Philadelphia. "Playing it strengthens the upper airway muscles that dilate the airway and reduces the chance that the airway tissue will become floppy during the night, which causes snoring." Dr. Getsy says tuba, trumpet and clarinet players have a similar advantage—though research in this

area is minimal.



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3. Exercise your tongue

"Certain exercises strengthen the tongue, reshaping it to fit better in the oral cavity and training it to 'live' on the roof of the mouth, so it doesn't fall and block the airway," says Janet Bennett, M.Ed, creator of the [IJustWantToSleep](#) program. She explains that making a sound of "t-t-t-t" (like you're scolding someone) strengthens the tip of the tongue. To exercise the sides, do the "tense and relax": Let your tongue hang out, relaxed—then tense it by pointing and holding for three seconds. Repeat.



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4. Bite down on a mouthpiece

"Boil-and-bite anti-snoring dental devices" can be effective, says Steven Y. Park, M.D., clinical assistant professor of otolaryngology at the New York Medical College and author of *Sleep, Interrupted* (Jodev Press, 2008). "These devices mold to your upper and lower teeth, and pull your lower jaw and the back of your tongue forward. This opens your airway, allowing you to breathe better." Dr. Park adds that mouthpieces prevent tongue collapse in deep sleep, and can also be effective in promoting sound sleep for non-snorers.



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5. Tap into radiofrequency energy

Coblation is a surgical procedure that reduces snoring by decreasing the volume of soft tissue in the nasal passages. "A thin needle or probe is pushed into the soft palate or soft nose tissue, and the radiofrequency energy heats and destroys the inner tissue, stiffening the palate and enlarging the airways," says Jon Mendelsohn, M.D., an otolaryngologist, plastic surgeon, and the medical director of the Advanced Cosmetic Surgery and Laser Center in Cincinnati. There's minimal pain and recovery time in this outpatient procedure—and most patients report an increased incidence of dreaming, which indicates they're experiencing deeper stages of uninterrupted sleep.



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6. Wear an air mask

A [Continuous Positive Airway Pressure \(CPAP\) mask](#) is commonly used for moderate to severe sleep apnea. They connect to a pump that pushes air into the nasal passages and throat, keeping airways open. However, not everyone can tolerate wearing a mask over their nose and face overnight. Dr. Krachman of Temple University says the CPAP is very effective, but only used correctly 50 percent of the time. Users, heed your sleep specialist's instructions! Shannah Godfrey, 46, of Independence, Mo., says, "I can't stand *not* to use my CPAP. I don't get as many sinus, ear, or throat infections now. My chronic sinusitis is gone and my colds last only half as long."



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7. Spray and sniff

According to Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D., author of *From Fatigued to Fantastic!* (Avery, 2007), eliminating yeast overgrowth in the nose reduces nasal congestion and sinusitis, which can cause snoring. Some nose sprays may do the trick—but do your research before you choose one. "There's very little scientific evidence to show that nasal strips, oral lubricants, and various nasal dilators are effective," says Dr. Krachman. "Yet they're purchased all the time. Each therapy needs to be investigated individually." Talk to your doctor regarding anti-snore therapies; finding an effective solution depends in part on the cause of your snoring.



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8. Use your tennis balls in bed

"Sew a tennis ball into a pocket T-shirt worn backwards, or wear a fanny pack with a tennis ball in it," says Shelby Freedman Harris, Psy.D., a clinical psychologist at the Sleep-Wake Disorders Center at the Montefiore Medical Center in New York City. "You'll feel uncomfortable when you roll on your back, and return to your side." The Silent Night Shirt works in a similar way, says Mary Battaglia, president of Professional Sleep Solutions. It's a T-shirt with a removable positional tube which is inserted into a pocket on the back of the shirt. The tube prevents you from rolling over and snoring.



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9. Go under the needles

Snoring can be caused by obstructed nasal passages or allergies, and it's important to find a remedy that treats the underlying cause. According to Terry Courtney, L.Ac., dean of the School of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine at Bastyr University outside Seattle, "Oftentimes with a structural problem, the local tissue is irritated or inflamed. Acupuncture can address this condition by reducing the local inflammation and helping to clear passageways."

While Courtney says a severe structural problem like a deviated septum would need to be addressed by a physician, "People with sinusitis often benefit from treatment with Chinese medicine. Sometimes it only takes a handful of treatments; often people benefit from more frequent treatment during peak allergy seasons. Depending on the practitioner's training, sometimes acupuncture is used [alone] and or in combination with Chinese herbs to address this condition." And the snorer—along with his or her partner—may therefore rest longer in the land of nod.

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