

# How to Get the Best Sleep You Can With Your Partner



By David O Volpi, M.D.

Sleeping habits aren't exactly first date conversation topics, but the reality is that more than a quarter of couples say their partner's sleep habits prevent them from getting a good night's rest, according to the National Sleep Foundation. Sleep incompatibilities are a top reason why one in four couples sleep in separate beds, and snoring is actually one of the top three reasons for divorce in the U.S.

So, how can women sleep in sync with their guys? Often times, simple lifestyle changes can help busy couples make their sleep routines mesh, and stop the snoring and bad sleeping habits that prevent them from sleeping soundly together. To

get the best sleep possible, try the following tips:

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**Sync up your sleep schedules.** Going to bed and waking up at different times every day is a sleep destroyer, and it's easy to do when couples have different work or social schedules. In order to practice good 'sleep hygiene,' couples should get into a pattern of going to sleep and waking up around the same time every day, including weekends.

**Change your position.** For some people, an increased amount of airway obstruction occurs when they sleep on their backs. This is called positional snoring. The obstruction can be reduced or eliminated if the snorer sleeps on their side, which is why bed partners always try to get their snoring counterpart to wake up and "roll over." In this case, a simple solution is to keep the snoring person off their back. To do so, you can try sewing a ball into the pocket of a t-shirt, and having the snorer wear it backwards during sleep. Sleeping with an extra pillow can also help, because it elevates the head and opens the airways.

**Reserve the bed for two things: Sleep and intimacy.** Try to avoid eating, watching TV or using electronics in bed. It's been scientifically proven that the light from TV and computer screens affects melatonin production and throws off circadian rhythms. Plus, working in bed won't help couples bond, or wind down and ease into sleep.

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**Make sure neither of you use alcohol or sleeping medications before bedtime.** Alcohol and medicines that make you drowsy can actually prevent you from sleeping through the night, even though they may make you drowsy initially. Alcohol and sedatives also cause the throat and tongue muscles to relax

even further than usual, exacerbating snoring.

**Create a relaxing bedtime routine.** When your body gets used to a nighttime routine (whether it's a beauty routine or an activity like reading), the brain is tricked into knowing that it's ready for bed. Try doing a crossword puzzle together or taking a warm bath. A study in *Sleep*, the Journal of the American Sleep Disorders Association, suggests taking a hot bath 90 minutes before bedtime can help you fall asleep. The hot water raises body temperature, and cool air in the bedroom lowers skin temperature, which triggers your body to produce melatonin and become drowsy.

Finally, always see a doctor if you or your partner struggles from sleep problems. Sleep disorders affect millions of people. Even celebrities like Rihanna and Shaquille O'Neal are known for struggles with snoring! But taking time to fix sleep problems is always worth it. In fact, it can help save relationships!

*David O. Volpi attended Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia and completed his post graduate training in General Surgery at the Hospital of The Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and a residency in Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery at the New York Medical College Affiliated Hospitals and the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. He is also the co-author of the book Wake Up! You're Snoring... which was conceived and written to be an authoritative information source for people seeking guidance on treating the many causes of snoring.*