

Nine Clouds Beds

Let us help you sleep

“The Book”

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Introduction



Need a New Mattress?

You may be experiencing sleep related issues such as back pain. You may have difficulties with your circulatory system or suffer from asthma. Maybe you just can't sleep because your bed is lumpy and the springs are poking through. A new mattress can help. Start browsing our collection of mattresses at www.nineclouds.ca

Your new bed is likely the best self-investment you're ever going to make. After all, you'll sleep on it every night for 8-12 years. How much is a good night's sleep worth to you? A thousand dollar set will cost you about \$100 a year—that's all! Most people spend a multiple of that each month on many purchases including their car! When you think about it like that, why aren't you buying the best set you can afford?

Beds Of All Styles & Sizes

Nine Clouds has an unusually large showroom, where you'll find many of the best sellers shown on our website as well as hard to find styles that your fellow shoppers tell us they have not seen in other stores. On display, you'll find trendy headboards, versatile daybeds, cost effective futons, space saving bunk beds and sale items.

All items are fairly priced including happy-delivery right to your room. Easy to set up items are done at no charge; more time consuming products can be set up for a fee (\$49-99 in most cases) if arranged at the time of sale.

Beds, Bunks, Daybeds & more...

Nine Clouds is a responsive family run company, with one convenient location. We happy-deliver beds of every description right to your room. Call or visit our showroom if you live within 100km of our "bigger than average" Mississauga Store. Drive a pickup, minivan or even a cube van? Many of our items are in stock and can be taken home the same day. We'll help you pack!



SECTION ONE

*Mattress and Bed
Selection*

Chapter 1: Mattress and Bed Sizes

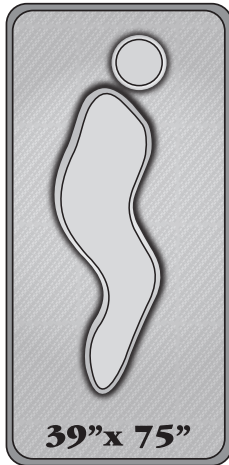


You can choose from over three dozen different constructions and comfort levels, from a body caressing plush to board hard firm. All are currently on display in our showroom. Delivery time is about five to ten days.

Custom sizes are available in every price range. Your cost is slightly higher than the closest larger standard size set. The manufacturing time on a custom set is usually one to two weeks.

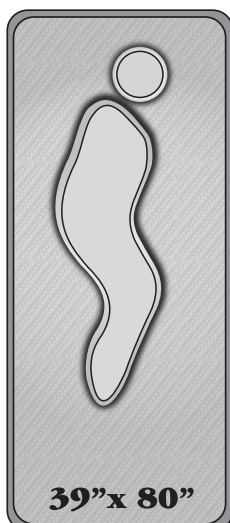
Twin Size Mattress

Twin sized mattresses are never larger than 39" x 75" but sometimes as much as 1-2" smaller depending on the coil system used in the manufacturer's specifications.



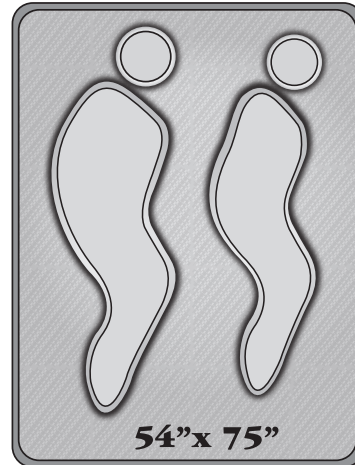
Twin XL Size Mattress

Twin XL sized mattresses are never larger than 39" x 80" but sometimes as much as 1-2" smaller depending on the coil system used in the manufacturer's specifications.



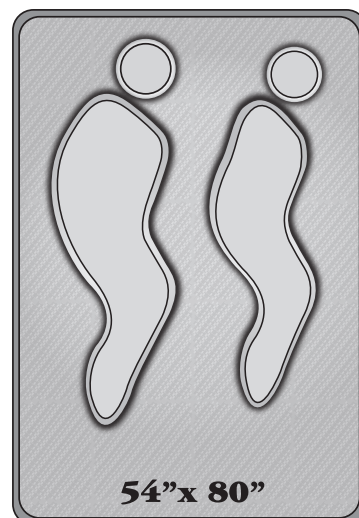
Double Size Mattress

Double sized mattresses are never larger than 54" x 75" but sometimes as much as 1-2" smaller depending on the coil system used in the manufacturer's specifications.



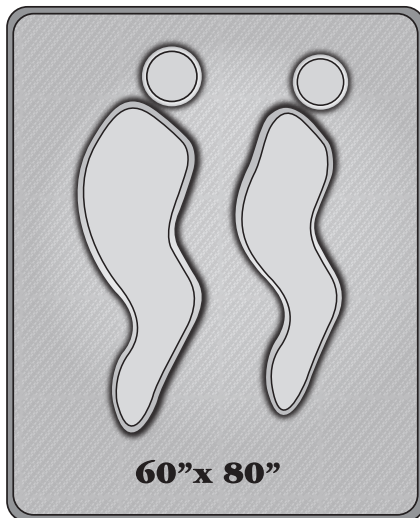
Double XL Size Mattress

Double XL sized mattresses are never larger than 54" x 80" but sometimes as much as 1-2" smaller depending on the coil system used in the manufacturer's specifications.



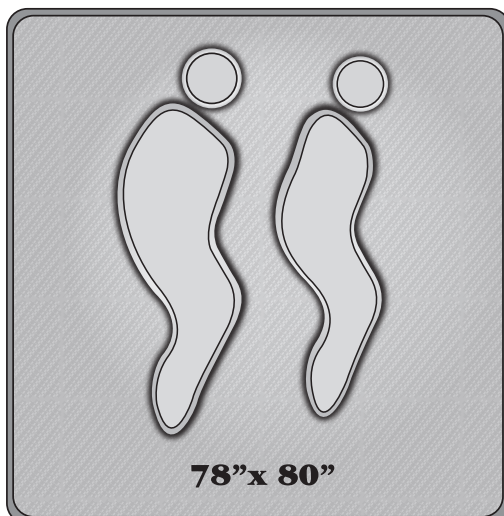
Queen Size Mattress

Queen sized mattresses are never larger than 60" x 80" but sometimes as much as 1-2" smaller depending on the coil system used in the manufacturer's specifications.



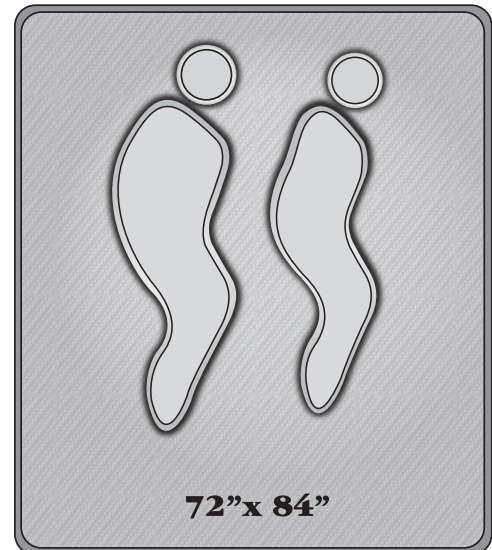
King Size Mattress

King sized mattresses are never larger than 78" x 80" but sometimes as much as 1-2" smaller depending on the coil system used in the manufacturer's specifications.



California King Size Mattress

California King sized mattresses are never larger than 72" x 84" but sometimes as much as 1-2" smaller depending on the coil system used in the manufacturer's specifications.



Custom Size Mattress

Custom sizes are available in every price range. Your cost is slightly higher than the closest larger standard size set. The manufacturing time on a custom set is usually one to two weeks.



International Mattress Size Chart

Mattress Size Chart (width x length)			
	Australia	UK	Europe
Twin / Single	36 x 75 in 91 x 191 cm		35 x 79 in 90 x 200 cm
Double / Full	54 x 75 in 137 x 191 cm		55 x 79 in 140 x 200 cm
Queen (UK King)	60 x 80 in 152 x 203 cm	60 x 78 in 152 x 198 cm	63 x 79 in 160 x 200 cm
King (UK Super King)	72 x 80 in 183 x 203 cm	72 x 78 in 183 x 198 cm	71 x 79 in 180 x 200 cm

Chapter 2: Types of Mattress Construction



When shopping for a mattress, there are many options and it can seem confusing. Knowing what construction types exist beforehand can be extremely useful. Armed with this guide you will avoid this confusion when you start visiting stores.

Innerspring Mattresses

Innerspring mattresses are the most common type of mattress sold today. They consist of wire coils inside the mattress, with a section of padding on top of this for comfort. The coils, depending on how they are constructed and how many of them are present in your mattress, will go a long way in determining the firmness of a mattress.

Many people believe that coil mattresses that are firmer give the best support. This is true in the case of people who sleep on either their back or stomach, but for people who sleep on their sides, mattresses that allow for the body to sink in somewhat and allow the spine to assume a proper alignment have been shown to be the best option. Mattresses that have individually wrapped coils provide the best side sleeper support of all the innerspring types.

Coil Types

Open Coil: This is the oldest type of coil, and still the most widely used. Adapted from the design used to make seats in buggies in the 19th century, this type of coil is hourglass shaped, and joined to the coils next to it by small wire spirals known as helicals. These springs work well when they are new, but may wear out more quickly than some of the more modern coil designs.

Offset Coil: This coil type is like the open coil, but it has a squared off head as opposed to a round one. This allows the mattress to contour better than with the traditional circular coil head of the open coil. The coils in this system are more cylindrical than the open coil, making them more durable than their predecessors. Mattresses with these coils are usually found in better, high end sets, than other coil types.

Pocket Coil: This type of coil contains cylindrical springs that are each individually wrapped in fabric pockets. The construction of these types of mattresses is designed to provide the best contour possible (this is why this coil

type is best for those who tend to sleep on their sides). Since the springs are not linked in the same way as open coil or offset coil springs are, you will feel your partner move much less than you would with other coil types. However, this also means that since each coil takes all of the weight that is put onto it by itself, and with no support from surrounding coils, the coils will provide less support for heavier people.

Continuous Coil: The continuous coil is made of rows of single wires attached to each other by helicals. The idea behind this design is that each coil deflects a larger percentage of the weight on it to other coils surrounding it, meaning less stress is put on each coil. Consequently you'll find these mattresses may keep their shape longer, causing these mattresses to have a longer lifespan than other innerspring categories.

Memory Foam Mattresses

In the 1970's, NASA launched a project to develop a substance that could be used to relieve the extreme g-forces that their astronauts were subject to during lift-off on space flights. They discovered that to reduce these g-forces, they needed a material that conformed to a person's body, not merely cushioned them. What they required was something like a mold, but without the rigidity, as a hard mold would create painful pressure points as the astronauts moved or were shaken around. They discovered a type of foam they named viscoelastic – that is, it would conform to a shape when pressure was applied, but would return to its original shape when the pressure was taken away. A consumer version

of this material became available to the general public in the 1980's.

Now every major mattress company manufacturer's models utilizing memory foam.

As with innerspring mattresses, foam mattresses are available in varying firmnesses. Generally speaking, foam mattresses that are firmer have a longer life than those that are softer. For some people a memory foam mattress can seem warmer than any other bed type and a lengthy in store trial of at least fifteen minutes is recommended.

Latex Mattresses

Latex foam mattresses have a higher elasticity than memory foam mattresses. This causes them to feel springy, as opposed to those made of memory foam, which feel solid. Memory foam will not feel like it is pushing against you to return to its normal state, whereas latex foam will feel like it is trying to return to its uncompressed form. For many individuals this is a good thing as they will experience less memory foam cratering during the night, caused by slow bounce back.

For some people, latex would seem out of the question due to allergies. Triggering of this allergy, however, requires skin contact. This is unlikely with the latex blends that are currently used in foam mattresses. It is also believed that the proteins that trigger latex allergies are washed during the preparation of the latexes which are used in the making of mattresses today, making the triggering of these allergies even less likely.

Chapter 3: Mattress Buying Tips



Remember that just because a mattress is soft doesn't mean it won't be supportive. When trying out different mattresses, always start by lying on the firmest mattress first, working your way to softest. Repeat the process once or twice to discover what levels feel most comfortable for you.

Things to remember when you are buying a mattress.

- As you lie on the mattress, think about how your shoulders, hips and lower back feel. Give your body a chance to respond to the mattress at these key touch points. Unfold your arms and lie on the bed as

relaxed as you can. Don't be afraid to ask the salesperson for a few minutes to yourself.

- Once you've narrowed down your choices, lie down on the mattress you are considering for at least 10 minutes.
- This will give you a truer feeling of the comfort of the mattress over time.
- Shop for a mattress and box spring (also known as a foundation) as a set. Mattresses and box springs are engineered to work together, providing optimal amounts of support and comfort for the life of the sleep set.
- Always buy the largest size mattress your room can accommodate. Couples should always choose either a queen or king size mattress and shop for a mattress together to ensure ample sleeping area for each of you.
- Measure your headboard and the height of your current mattress and bring this information to the store. If you decide to purchase a thicker mattress than you currently have, consider getting a low profile box spring so your headboard will be visible.

Chapter 4: Choosing the Right Sleeping Pillow



Statistics indicate that more than 130 million North Americans have trouble sleeping, which can impact your physical and mental health. Sleep is a vital part of rejuvenating your physical abilities, and lack of this rest has far reaching implications into both your personal and professional life.

Selecting the right pillow for your taste, sleeping style, and comfort is the first step towards a restful night's sleep. In recent years, a wide variety of pillows have been invented to address the physical needs and comfort the most common sleeping issues, making this a wonderfully easy period in which to select a sleeping pillow that most suits your individual requirements.

There are essentially three materials from which pillows are made, with a multitude of subdivisions within each material to help you narrow your

search. The three most popular pillow materials are down, polyester fill, and a new type of pillow called Memory Foam, which is a foam-like construction that conforms to the contours of your body.

The first thing to consider when you are planning to purchase a new pillow is your sleeping style. You may not have given much thought to your sleeping style in the past, but this is an integral part of proper pillow selection.

Step One: What is your sleeping style?

Your sleeping style isn't as complicated as it sounds. It is simply the manner in which you normally sleep – how you typically arrange yourself and your body when preparing for sleep. Do you lie on your back, side or your stomach when you sleep? Or, do you toss, turn and change positions frequently during the night? Since pillows are not created equally, different pillows cater to varying styles of sleeping. Understanding how you usually sleep will help you select the best pillow to help you to enjoy restful nights.

If you're not sure what your sleeping style is, pay attention to the position you are in when you fall asleep, and then again when you wake up. Are you in the same position, or has it changed? The position in which you find yourself most frequently is your sleep style. For a second opinion, you may want to consult your partner or the person with whom you sleep.

Your sleeping style can have long-term health effects, so it is important to buy a pillow that supports your body while you sleep. For example, if you sleep on your side, you may want to purchase a foam-filled side pillow that will support your back while you rest. On the other hand, as a back sleeper, you may want to opt for a memory foam pillow that will provide you with neck support. As a stomach sleeper, you may find that a very thin, yet firm, down sleeping pillow provides the most comfort.

A relaxed sleeping position enables your body to rest and recharge, ensuring that you can operate more fully while you are awake. If you are not properly supported or aligned while you sleep, you may not get a restful night's sleep, and improper support can also lead to back and other joint problems.

Step Two: What type of pillow material should I buy?

With your sleeping style in mind, let us foray into the intriguing world of sleeping pillows. Each type of material and style can make a difference in supporting your sleeping style.

There are three main materials from which pillows are made: down, foam or polyester fill, and Tempurpedic. Within each of these types of materials are several differences, or sub-categories of materials from which to choose.

Down Sleeping Pillows

The “down” in down pillows refers to the feather down of the birds from which the pillow is made.

But there are different types of down, just as there are different types of birds.

Goose Down – Authentic goose down is the king of kings when it comes to pillow construction. Down is soft, pliable and fluffy and was the original choice of the wealthy when pillows were first created. Goose down pillows, as indicated by the name, are pillows that are made from 100% goose down feathers. Goose down tends to be the most expensive pillow material, and its devotees swear by it. But, like many things, goose down pillows are not necessarily better than any other type of pillow—it comes down to personal taste.

Feather – Feather pillows feel surprisingly like authentic down pillows, but are made from a variety of feathers, not only the feather from geese. Feather pillows usually contain some goose down feathers, which is indicated in percentages on the cover and pillow ingredients, and also other types of bird feathers, like duck feathers, which may or may not be indicated. Often a feather pillow will indicate “30% goose down, 70% feathers.” One common complaint of feather pillows versus down pillows is that whole feathers will sometimes puncture the exterior of the pillow, sticking out of the pillows and making their way into your bedroom. The feathers may also pierce the skin if they catch you just right, causing a moment of discomfort. These are ultimately minor annoyances, but important to note because some people do find this most irritating. The main benefit of feather pillows is that they feel very much like authentic goose down pillows, without the same hit to your

wallet. Feather pillows are a more cost effective way to obtain a similar feel to goose down, if your budget prevents you from investing in the real thing.

Allergy Free Down Alternatives – What is you love the look, feel and texture of a down pillow, and you have the budget for it, but are allergic to the feathers? A small but significant percentage of people are allergic to down and feather pillows, which has preciously made these pillow materials off limits to them, but allergy free down-like alternatives have recently been developed to address this issue. These pillows are made from either feathers or goose down, but to address the issue of allergies, they are then wrapped in an eco-friendly, chemical free, allergy-friendly material. Therefore, the down is protected and insulated from the pillow user, without coming into direct contact with you and your allergies. Several companies make these allergy-protective down pillows, so if you like the feel of down but are concerned about your allergies, ask a salesperson at your local bedding store about this option.

Foam/Polyester Fill Pillows

Foam pillows are typically filled with a synthetic material, most popularly polyester, and makes for a firm, long lasting pillow. Devotees of the foam pillow often scoff at a down or feather pillow, accusing them of being too squishy to be comfortable. Again, this comes down to personal taste, but if you are looking for a very sturdy, firm pillow, you'll want to investigate the foam pillow.

Memory Foam Pillows

The original and memory foam pillow is made by Tempurpedic. Many companies now produce equal quality memory foam pillows and they have gained in worldwide popularity for its softness and comfort. Memory foam is designed to remember the contours of your body, providing support exactly where your body needs it.

These types of pillows have fans as well as detractors, and again, the choice comes down to a largely personal preference. Memory foam material is certainly very different; the pillow is “squishy” and doesn’t bounce back quickly, but instead holds the shape of your head and neck. When you shift positions, it takes a few seconds for the pillow to rebound and readjust to your new position. The most popular type of memory foam pillow builds in a ridge of neck support, making it great for many back sleepers. Some people absolutely love these pillows, while others have a very hard time getting used to the feel of them.

Step Three: What thickness and firmness are right for me?

Once you’ve decided on the type of material you’d like for your pillow, and realized what your sleeping style is, it is time to narrow your pillow search by deciding upon the right pillow thickness for yourself. Even if you have chosen the best material for yourself, selecting a pillow that is either too thick or too thin will compromise your sleep. There are also several different pillow

shapes to choose from, ranging from square to rectangular, adding another variable to mix.

Pillow Thickness and Firmness

All pillows come in a variety of thicknesses and firmnesses. Thickness is not the same as firmness; it is possible to have a thin pillow that is firm, or a thin pillow that is soft. The same is true for each thickness of pillow – it will be available in a variety of densities.

There are generally four categories for firmness: soft, medium, firm, and extra firm. There may be subcategories under each of these depending on the language and terminology a company chooses to use, but these four basic terms will get you started on your search for the ideal pillow.

Down and feather pillows are measured by what is known in the industry as “fill power,” which is a measure for how many feathers are used in the pillow, which impacts its thickness and firmness. Foam pillows come in a few standard thicknesses and are measured for firmness, which will be clearly marked on the label. But it is important to always test your pillow in the store; what the manufacturer calls “medium firmness” you may find to be firm. Use the terminology as a gauge for where to start—not as canonized language.

Broadly speaking, people who sleep on their stomachs or sides typically find the most comfort with thin pillows, as there is less strain on the neck. On the other hand, many back sleepers enjoy a thicker pillow that supports both the neck and head. Each individual’s spinal shape

and sleeping style creates pillow needs that are different, and thus, testing out various firmnesses and thicknesses helps you ascertain which is best for your peaceful rest.

Step Four: What are the sleeping pillow shapes that are good for me?

Pillows come in a variety of shapes, some of which comes down to preference, and some of which have a specific design. The most popular pillow shape is a rectangular shape, which can vary in size, but have the purpose of supporting the head, neck and shoulders. Square pillows have become a more popular shape for sleeping pillows in recent years, and their narrower width is used primarily to support the head. Square pillows have gained popularity because their size and shape lends them to double as decorative pillows.

Historically, pillows have been used to support the head, or a combination of the head, neck, and shoulders during sleep. In recent years, several other types of pillows have been developed to support different areas of the body.

Head Pillows

Head pillows are by far the most popular kind of pillow. This is a standard pillow that supports the head, and these can be positioned to support the neck and shoulders as well. The wealthy classes used these pillows as far back as Ancient Egypt. These classes didn't want to sleep with their head and bodies on the same plane, and they wished to have their heads elevated during

sleep. Thus, the head pillow was created, and it has sustained throughout history as the most common pillow type.

Neck Pillows

Neck pillows are designed to mainly support the neck. Some people find that sleeping with a head pillow places too much pressure on the neck and leaves them feeling stiff and with a sore neck in the morning. Neck pillows are designed with the main support targeted at elevating the neck, rather than the head.

There are two main shapes for a neck pillow. One is a rectangular shape, and with a "s" lip at the bottom edge of the pillow. These few inches of support are meant to be placed directly under the neck for support. There is a gentle slope that angles into the remainder of the pillow, where the head will rest.

The other main type of neck pillow is also known as a travel pillow because it is a relatively small and packable pillow that is easy to take with you on a journey. This pillow has a circular shape, with a hollow center, similar to the shape of a bagel or a doughnut. There is an opening on one edge of the circle so you can open the pillow and clasp it around your neck. The design of this pillow is also to support the neck, rather than the head.

Side and Body Pillows

Side pillows and body pillows have a variety of designs and uses. These were originally designed for pregnant women who had difficulty finding a comfortable position in which to sleep, but

they have now taken off and become popular for people with chronic pain, back problems, arthritis, and other ailments.

The side pillow is generally a rectangular shape and is used to support the side of your body, mainly if you sleep on your side. A side sleeper sometimes likes extra support either in front or behind them to make the side sleeping position more comfortable. If you sleep on your side, your back may not be properly supported which can lead to spine and back problems. Using a side pillow for extra support is one way to ensure that your spine and back are well protected.

A body pillow is an extra-long rectangular pillow that is used for comfort and full body support. This pillow is particularly popular with pregnant women who have difficulty finding a comfortable position in bed, as well as people suffering from chronic pain or fatigue related illnesses. A body pillow is often used by side sleepers, who want a longer bit of support than the typical side pillow provides. The body pillow can be several feet long, usually extending about half of the height of an average person. Side sleepers like to curl up with the body pillow, using it for their head, as well as to support their body. It can also be placed down the length of the back of a side sleeper for additional back support.

Step Five: Remembering the health and comfort of your body

The way we sleep, along with our quality of sleep, can have a significant influence on both our

physical and mental health. Some sleep disorders are related to orthopedic conditions that have their origins in the musculoskeletal system, triggered or increased by improper support of the head, neck and body.

Sleep deprivation can cause a variety of physical and emotional problems, which can greatly impact your day-to-day life, as well as the overall quality of your life. Choosing the correct pillow for your sleeping style, comfort and taste is one of the first steps towards having a night of peaceful sleep, which leads to a productive day and an increased feeling of energy. A good pillow is certainly a step in the right direction for a comfortable nights' sleep, along with the health of your back and spine.

Remember that one pillow-filling, thickness, size or style is not inherently better than another. The way you sleep is different for each person, which makes selecting a pillow a wholly personal choice. Make sure you test out several pillows while you are shopping, allowing you to experience the variety of pillows that exist, before making your final choice and settling on your new nighttime companion.

Chapter 5: The Adjustable Electric Bed: The Stuff of Dreams



Searching for a restful night's sleep for yourself or someone close? Looking to remedy back ache, neck pain, or a loved one's constant discomfort? Wanting a bed that's both functional and conventional – the best of both worlds? If your answer is “yes” to any of these questions, then it's quite possible, no matter what your age, that your next purchase will be an adjustable bed.

Designed with medical and scientific research behind it, adjustable beds can sooth your aches, align your spine, and promote good sleep with a simple “adjustment” tailor-made specifically for you. Blessed with the same functionality of a hospital bed, an adjustable electric bed can be an ideal solution – whether you need it for help with a medical condition or simply to better enjoy the balm of sleep.

An Informed Decision

Once you've decided that an adjustable electric bed is for you, next comes the shopping stage. Before you begin however, know that there are a lot of models out there: to compare, to contrast, and to choose from.

As a consumer, your best approach is to know as much about adjustable beds as possible so that you can make an informed decision. Like any bed, this is a major purchase, one made for the long-term. The question is though, which adjustable bed model is best for you? In other words, which is the bed of your "dreams"? There are several points to consider.

Designed for comfort, most adjustable beds are comparable to beds found in a hospital or a medical-care facility. Similar in principle to hospital beds, an adjustable electric bed is made to adjust to your particular needs. It can gently elevate your head and/or feet; it can position you in a way that will relieve aches; it can promote circulation; and most impressively, it can be conducive to rest. All this with a touch of a button.

Adjustable electric beds can be the way to go for a number of reasons: sleep disorders, being bed-ridden, or simply wanting a place to relax and ready for the next day. They're perfect for therapeutic rest, but just as well-suited for simple relaxation and everyday activities, such as reading, watching television, doing paperwork, or working on a laptop.

Checklist: The Mattress

But what of the sleep surface? The type of mattress you buy is key to any adjustable bed working properly. Depending on your sleep needs and habits, it's important to find a mattress that matches.

When shopping, keep in mind that an adjustable bed is just that: adjustable. Typically, it will "fold" in accordance to a two-point articulation system, which means that the bed will adjust in two specific places. As a result, the mattress will divide into three sections: the head section, the middle section, and the foot section.

Naturally, the mattress you select will need to respond to such movement. Thus, though there are several different mattresses to choose from, the underlying aspect of each is that they can adhere to the demands of an adjustable bed.

The ideal mattress will work with minimal resistance, while keeping its elemental qualities. As for the type of mattress you'll want to invest in, this all depends on what you need and what you'd like to receive from your bed.

- **Memory Foam:** Adjustable all its own, a memory foam mattress is typically designed with visco-elastic foam, enabling it to conform to the contours of your body by temperature and weight. Such mattresses also help reduce pressure points, while caressing the body with memory foam.
- **Latex:** Similar to memory-foam mattresses as far as pressure level, latex mattresses are

the most resilient to movement. As well latex mattresses have the longest life-cycle, although more costly they can be more economical because they need to be replaced less often.

- **Spring Coil:** Made to absorb motion during sleep, such as tossing and turning. Such mattresses are sturdy in construction, designed with innersprings to limit motion while keeping the body supported. Popular maker: Leggett & Platt.

In addition, consumer demand has prompted manufacturers to create mattresses to meet even more specific needs. Examples include:

- **Lumbar Support:** Made to help those who suffer from back problems. The mattress's construction is designed to support and align the body for a better night's sleep.
- **Anti-Allergy:** A relatively new design that's become increasingly popular due to the number of allergens in the air. Such a mattress comes equipped with a removable top that can be cleaned of contamination.

The Right Size

You'll also need to choose the right size of mattress. This too will depend on your individual needs. This is what an adjustable bed can offer though: an individualized bed made for maximum comfort. If you're using an adjustable electric bed, the chances are good that you have a specific condition to relieve. And thus, if the aim is specific, so should be your mattress. Overall, there are five basic sizes:

- **Extra Long Single:** Appropriate for a person who's bed-ridden and/or needs to spend a good deal of time in bed. (approximately 39" x 80")
- **Extra Long Double:** Similar to the extra long single, it's made for the individual, but with more room. (approximately 54" x 80")
- **Queen:** Made for an individual or a couple, the bed cannot be adjusted for each person though. (approximately 60" x 80")
- **Dual Queen:** A queen-sized bed in which both sides can be adjusted for the individual's comfort level. (two units approximately 30" x 80")
- **Dual King:** More room, with each side adjustable to fit the individual's needs. (two extra long twins put together each approximately 39" x 80")

The Superstructure

After settling on your mattress, next comes the "superstructure," the base of the adjustable bed. This is what will make your bed "go." It's essentially the power that drives the machine. The motor.

Just as your mattress complements your sleep habits, so should your adjustable electric bed. One of the main aspects you'll want to compare is the sound level of the motor. The ideal motor is a quiet one, one that won't be too overwhelming when in operation.

The reason for this is two-fold: 1) it's simply more pleasant for the machinery to be as quiet as possible and 2) being quiet, any potential

problems can be detected more easily, should the sound level ever increase with time. Most motors today are located within sound-dampening cases though so you really can't go wrong in this department.

When choosing an adjustable bed frame, remember again that this is an important investment. Though some systems may cost less, they also may not be able to withstand use for a considered period of time. Proper research is always advisable when buying such an item. You'll want to make sure you get a quality return-on-investment and one that will also offer longevity.

Price-wise, adjustable beds range from \$1,500 to \$4,000 and above. Adjustable electric bed will cost more than manual versions. To help with maintenance, most electric bases also come with a back-up battery system in case of power loss.

Buy with Confidence

A reputable manufacturer can provide peace of mind. An adjustable electric bed isn't just a bed frame, but literally a piece of machinery. You'll want to be certain that all parts are working properly and have the confidence that it will continue as such down the road.

For instance, with manufacturers like Leggett and Platt, you can purchase knowing that their long-standing reputations in the market are based on satisfied customers, repeat business, and industry-leading innovation. Over time, these manufacturers have made modifications to

improve upon winning formulas. As a consumer, you benefit from such competition.

In general, you'll want to look at what each manufacturer offers in common and what makes each unique. Depending on your need, one type of adjustable system will likely work best. If for example, you need an adjustable electric bed to help relieve poor circulation, you'll want to find one that promotes good blood flow. A latex or memory foam mattress will likely be your best choice

Guard rails, a mechanical lift – such additions may also be helpful for self-care as well as for a person taking care of someone else at home. Other add-ons that can help make an adjustable electric bed easier to operate and maintain include memory positioning, wireless control, and massage options. Massage, like Leggett and Platt's wave massage, is usually available in gentle to powerful options.

You'll also want to look into finger-tip adjustments. How does the remote work and what can be controlled with a push of a button. Does it have a memory function? While adjustable beds are ideal for most anyone, oftentimes they're purchased to give people the kind of comfort at home that they would receive at a hospital. Independent living can be greatly enhanced with proper controls and movements being just a click away. For the caregiver, such easy functionality will also prove beneficial.

Maintenance and Care

As for how to care for your adjustable electric bed, you'll want to look into the length of the warranty and what is covered with it. While you shouldn't have to worry when it comes to major manufacturers, it's simply "buyer beware" to know what you have (and don't have) covered by the fine print.

Keep in mind that adjustable beds are heavy. They're not like regular beds that come apart and are easy enough to assemble by two people. An adjustable electric bed needs to be put together properly to ensure absolute quality once it's ready to use. To do this, it's a good idea to request full service for your new bed: shipping, delivery, and set-up.

You wouldn't want to try and do the assembly on your own, only to find that it isn't working right. Who would you call then? The manufacturer or store. To save a house call, request this service from the start. Overall, such a package would cost around \$200. However, if you do choose to assemble such a bed on your own, you'll want to take a look at the ease of assembly. Does the bed come largely pre-assembled?

Leggett and Platt systems for instance are almost entirely assembled when they arrive. Some assembly is required, such as attaching the caster wheels and programming the remotes, the entire process can take as little as 10 minutes. If you're comfortable and confident about assembling things yourself, then such a system should be fairly simple. If however you're at all doubtful,

then definitely consider the full-service package. Make sure your bed is set up right from the start.

Functional and Stylish

And finally, when selecting an adjustable electric bed, don't go into the process thinking that you're purchasing a "hospital bed." Today, manufacturers are creating beds that are both functional and stylish.

As noted above, an adjustable bed is a major purchase and if of quality, should last for up to a decade. You'll therefore want to be happy with what you're putting in your home. This speaks to the aesthetics of the system. It need not look like a hospital bed and in most cases, it won't.

Though the functionality of an adjustable electric bed is comparable to that of a hospital bed, the aesthetics of today's models more resemble conventional beds. In essence, you can now enjoy the best of both – comfort and style – with a modern adjustable bed. (During your search, simply look for a bed that has its motors and flex points concealed.)

Given the rise in popularity of adjustable beds, most manufacturers are trying to design models that are as attractive as possible. While such beds are being purchased primarily for comfort and adjustability, they are also being "selected" for their appearance. Thanks to this, selection has become much more varied.

And there you have it. Now, how far off is that good night's rest?

Chapter 6: Choosing a Bed After Injury or Hospitalization



Introduction

Whether recovering from an accident or injury or planning your return home from hospital after a spinal problem, you will be wondering about how to select the right bed and associated equipment.

There are a large number of options on the market, and it can be confusing and time consuming trying to determine your specific requirements. This guide is designed to help you sort through the various alternatives, and to understand the different products available.

Gathering Information

Before looking at any piece of equipment in detail, it is essential that you gather some basic information about your rehabilitation plans. This

involves not only speaking to your doctor or surgeon, but also to your physiotherapist, occupational therapist, case manager and/or social worker. If you have not been provided with support therapists, you should ask your doctor to make a referral as these specialists are trained in reviewing equipment requirements, understanding your specific needs and advising on suitability and funding options.

Equipment Requirements

You should ask your therapists what equipment you will require upon discharge or return to home. This does not only include the bed itself, and or mattress and pillows, but other equipment to be used on or near the bed. Some of this equipment will need to be attached to the bed, slide under the bed, or rest between the frame and the mattress. This will be crucial when selecting the bed and mattress – as all of your equipment needs to work together. Other equipment can also potentially limit the space you have for a bed and you will need to be aware of this when selecting a frame and fittings.

Care Requirements

Understanding your expected care requirements is also important before contemplating the bed itself. This may seem irrelevant until you contemplate:

- will you need help getting in and out of bed?
- who will provide this help?
- will there be exercises or other activities you need to do in bed that another person needs to assist with?

All of these questions will impact whether you need a height adjustable bed that will prevent your caregiver from suffering back problems of their own.

If you are mobilizing yourself you may require high side bars, but these will be impractical if you need a caregiver in the short term and the bars cannot be removed.

Length of Rehabilitation

How long are you expected to take to recover? What are the phases of this rehabilitation? These questions will help determine whether you should purchase or hire equipment. You will need to decide whether it is worthwhile investing in top of the range support for a long term condition, or whether you can make do with less expensive products, or hire alternatives until your condition stabilizes.

Available Funding

While this topic will be considered later in this guide, it will be important to have an idea of what funding for equipment is likely to be available to you.

The differences in costs can be significant, and understanding your total budget will assist in determining what equipment is a priority.

Possible Complications

Are you likely to be immobile for an extended period? Are pressure sores a concern, or other circulation issues? Are there specific requirements to avoid these, or support your rehabilitation? Are

there specific instructions for spinal care, bowel and/or bladder support, mobility and comfort that need to be considered when selecting a bed and accessories?

Choosing a Bed

Adjustable posture: If you are going to spend an extended period in bed you may want to consider a bed that provides for adjustable posture. This will make it more comfortable for you to sit in the bed, and may make sleeping more comfortable. Adjustable posture can also be helpful for avoiding pressure sores as you are able to adjust to different positions without placing further pressure on your spine or other injured area.

You should ensure you discuss these options with your therapist to ensure you are making an informed decision about the best supports for your particular condition.

Mattress inclinators: These devices can be used on a standard bed and are fitted to the frame to provide sections that can incline at the top or bottom of the bed. The mechanism itself is electrical and controlled by a separate handset.

Mattress inclinators allow you to save on the expense of an entirely new bed, but you will need to check whether they are compatible with your mattress, and whether the platform, frame and power mechanism are compatible with any other therapeutic devices you might require (such as bed poles, side bars and etc. More on these below).

The amount of noise made in moving the platforms can vary considerably. Make sure you have heard the unit incline and recline with the mattress on and with a person in the bed. If the noise is irritating the first time – imagine when your spouse changes position for the twentieth time! Of course noise is not always the prime consideration, and caregivers for the elderly can sometimes prefer to hear when their patient is adjusting the bed, so as to ensure they are able to provide assistance if necessary.

You will want to check whether the incline of a sitting user prevents the bedside table or therapeutic aids from being reached. As the incline will raise you forward, this will need to be taken into account when positioning furniture and aids.

Electric adjustable beds: Adjustable beds have a sectioned base that allows the bed to incline to a sitting position, to raise the legs, or both. It is important to discuss your bed selection with your occupational therapist as there may be some postures which are not advisable for your condition.

While manual style adjustment is a cheaper option, these can be difficult to manage for both yourself and your caregiver. An electric mechanism, preferably with a handset control is easier and ensures that changes can be made to posture at all times.

In cases where you need to move regularly and will not have a full time caregiver, this can be very important. It will be important to understand:

- What angle is best for your spine during your recovery, and whether there are inclines to be avoided
- Whether you could/should use a leg raise – as this can sometimes put pressure on the lower spine if applied incorrectly
- Whether leg raising will assist with circulation concerns, or in assisting you to gradually return to a more upright position without sliding down the bed
- Which positions the user can modify with the manual control, and which can be reached only by the caregiver

There are both domestic and hospital style frames available. Many patients prefer a domestic style, which looks like a regular bed, but there are good reasons to consider the hospital style frame:

- Whether you need to attach bed poles, side bars, clamps, trays or other equipment to the frame – many domestic designs do not allow for this
- Does the frame of the bed provide a solid edge for you to lean on when entering and exiting the bed?
- Will you need to hang catheter bags or other medical supports from the frame discretely?
- If you are anticipating changing posture frequently a less rigid frame may cause mattress movement and bedding slippage

Finally, quality of manufacture will be crucial if you need to adjust the frame regularly or will be spending a significant amount of time in the bed (especially in one position). Beds that no longer adjust easily, are noisy, jam or are not smooth in their movements can be the result.

For couples: Some beds have the option of separate adjustment for couples, allowing for different inclines on either side of the bed. Essentially this comprises two single beds slotted in together to adjust separately.

If the long term intention is that you will share your bed with your partner, but need bed rails or other supportive equipment in the interim, then a bed with separate adjustment could be a viable option. These beds often come apart and can be used separately as two singles. Then when the equipment is no longer required on both sides, the beds can be slotted back together.

Adjustable Height

Adjustable height beds: Adjustable height beds are helpful if you find it difficult to stand when getting out of the bed. Raising the height of the bed to allow the use to place their legs on the floor and then turn at waist height can assist. However this height may not be conducive to caregivers providing assistance, or may not be the best height for getting back into the bed. Adjustable height beds allow the bed to be raised and lowered to meet the varying requirements.

Adjustable height beds are also helpful when other furniture is to be used in bed – for example a free standing table from which to eat, drink or read.

Adjustable height beds can be powered manually or electrically. As with adjustable beds, manual adjustment may be cumbersome or physically demanding, and movement may not be as smooth as with electric adjustment.

Manual adjustment often requires the caregiver to adjust bed height as the control is outside of the bed (usually at the foot), which may hinder independence.

Other Alternatives

Chair beds: These come in two forms – beds that will allow a high level of incline to resemble a chair, and chairs that allow a high level of recline to resemble a bed. You can then move between sitting and laying without needing to transfer from one piece of furniture to another.

Consider the following:

- Is the bed intended to be used in the bedroom or a shared living space? The chair bed may not necessarily provide the most comfortable mattress if it is to be used as the bed where you will sleep. It can also take a lot of space for a living area.
- Is it intended that you will remain in one room only? There are psychological advantages to having one room for day use and one for

night time sleeping when you are in the rehabilitation phase.

- Is the incline an appropriate posture for your specific spinal condition? Some chair beds incline into a “V” shape before flattening, which can cause pressure on the lower spine, and not offer the gradual change of position that an adjustable bed does.
- What supports are available for the feet and lower legs? This can be very important if you are managing circulation issues and reduced mobility.

Choosing a Mattress

While the functionality of an adjustable bed can seem like the essential key to sleeping comfort, the mattress you place on top of it is not to be overlooked. Not all mattresses are suitable for use with mattress platforms or adjustable beds.

Specific conditions will demand you consider your mattress more carefully, especially if you are expected to be immobile for an extended period. While the softness of a memory foam or latex mattress may assist in avoiding pressure sores, a firmer mattress may be required if you have difficulty turning or moving in the bed. It will be important to test out the mattress not only sitting, but lying, turning and returning to a standing position to ensure it is the best option.

For those with continence problems, ensure you check the availability of waterproof mattress protectors. You will also want to feel these against the mattress to check they do not affect the

firmness and comfort of the bed itself – and also that they are not noisy and do not cause friction when turning.

Hinged mattresses are most suitable for adjustable beds and mattress inclinators. Fibre or foam filled mattresses are also possible alternatives. Inner coil, pocket sprung or wire edged mattresses are unsuitable and can cause discomfort as the movement damages the mattress. If you have loss of sensation these can be particularly dangerous as you may not feel if skin is being pinched by the coils.

Innerspring Mattresses: More than likely the bed you slept on as a child was an innerspring mattress. This type of mattress is the most common type of mattress sold and most of us have slept on a variety of them in our lives. Unlike the mattress in the hospital, which was likely foam of some variety, an innerspring mattress consists of wire coils covered by padding. The more coils the firmer the mattress, due to the reduction in space between the coils to create sagging.

As the padding on top of the coils ages, it thins. If you have slept on the same bed for years, and then taken a vacation, you know what how this feels. Suddenly you realize the bed is hard and you can feel the coils through the padding. Sometimes the solution is as simple as purchasing a new mattress.

Coil varieties: For those who prefer an innerspring mattress, there are a number of varieties of coil type that will suit different types

of sleeper. For more information on coils, see our article under “Mattress Types Guide”.

Memory foam mattresses: Created from a material designed by NASA scientists to cushion astronauts on take off, memory foam mattresses conform to your shape when you lay down, but then return to their original shape when you move. This allows shoulders and hips to sink into the foam, providing support for the areas in between, but also ensures that the shape of the mattress changes when you move on it.

Memory foam mattresses are available in varying levels of firmness and durability.

Be wary of very cheap alternatives in memory foam – as they may be correspondingly low in quality and age quickly into a hard, flat lump.

Latex Mattresses: Latex mattresses are more elastic and pliable than the memory foam mattress and will feel more springy and resistant. This can be experienced as a faster “bounce back” when moving in the bed, and less likelihood of sinking into softer patches.

These may not be appropriate if you experience latex allergies – however it may still be worthwhile checking them out. As your body will not actually be touching the mattress – and therefore the latex – you may find there is no problem with allergies.

Therapeutic Aids and Other Furniture

Whilst in hospital the occupational therapist may have recommended and/or provided any of a number of devices to assist you in sitting, turning or getting out of the bed.

Typically these can include:

- lifting poles, to assist with getting in and out of bed.
- rope ladders and pull straps to allow the user to pull themselves into an upright position
- grab handles to assist with moving in the bed, sitting up and turning over
- free standing backrests to assist with sitting in a standard bed
- supports, wedges, footboards and one way glides to prevent sliding down the bed
- powered leg lifters to raise the legs to a 90° angle, allowing the user to slide legs onto the bed

Check what equipment is available once you leave the hospital before you go bed shopping – some attach items to the frame, and some slide under the bed. This will influence your choice of bed frame. Remember that the model used in the hospital may not be available for hire or purchase elsewhere or may be outdated.

Check the equipment requirements before committing to a bed frame. Does it need a particular size frame to attach to? Does it have specifications for the headboard? Is there a requirement for space either side of the bed or between the bed and the floor?

Grab rails need to be positioned carefully in a bed with a motorized adjustment – to ensure cords and cables do not get caught, or trip you when you leave the bed.

Ensure you understand how much electrical equipment you are anticipating placing in a confined space – some equipment will generate heat, and take up space in the area between bed and wall, making movement difficult. You will need to be careful not to overload power outlets, so ensure you understand where equipment will need to be located to access an appropriate outlet. Free standing backrests will have specific requirements for headboards.

Also, ensure you try the equipment itself. Some examples of why this is important:

- if a free standing item, is not stable enough you may need to consider one which attaches to the bed
- if you are not very tall you may find that free standing items are too high for comfort
- if you are quite tall, conversely they may be too low and an alternative might provide better support
- if you will need to use the aid to get out of both beds and chairs, a free standing aid may be multi functional

Finances

In the case of accident or injury, ensure your lawyer provides advice on your ability to receive compensation for appropriate bed and equipment, including mattress, for rehabilitation.

Ensure you raise this early so that the items can be included in the care management plan. If you are going to require suitable bedding for a long time, ensure your lawyer is aware of this – now is not the time to be taking cheap alternatives. You are going to be sleeping on this bed for a long time!

Always speak to your occupational therapist prior to purchasing expensive equipment. In many cases an OT recommendation will be required if your health insurer is going to fund the equipment. The OT may also be able to discuss your requirements with your doctor if the insurer requires a doctor's recommendation.

Occupational therapists can also advise on best value for money when comparing models – there may be twenty different functions in a motorized adjustable bed – but do you really need that many? If your health insurer will only fund a certain dollar value for appliances and rehabilitation aids, the OT can assist you in prioritizing these, or suggesting alternative avenues for funding. If some equipment is only required for a short time it may make more sense to hire this and save your insurance for the longer term needs.



SECTION TWO

*Sleep Quality
and Your Health*

Chapter 7: Don't Let Bed Bugs Get the Best of You



I rang the doorbell full of excitement and fear. Excited to see my friends, but afraid of the bed bugs that have been sharing their home for the past year. My friends assured me the bed bugs were under control, and with a few simple precautions I should not be bitten. I was not reassured, but decided to take the chance. I learned a lot about bed bugs during my visit.

Bed Bug Revival

After over 50 years without bed bugs, infestations are increasingly common in the U.S. Bed bugs have taken up residence in schools, shelters, houses, apartments, motels, health care facilities, buses, offices, movie theatres—basically any structure that people use.

The common bed bug, *Crimex lectularis*, is a one-quarter-inch-long brown insect with a flattened body. It feeds only on the blood of warm-blooded animals, preferably humans. These little bugs are very resilient; the young can survive for months and the adults for a year or more without feeding. Bed bugs can't fly, but that doesn't stop them from moving quickly over floors, walls, ceilings, and other surfaces. Females lay one or two eggs per day in secluded places, totaling hundreds of eggs in a lifetime.

During the day bed bugs hide in tiny crevices close to the places where people sleep. Mattresses, box springs, headboards, and bed frames are perfect hiding places for bed bugs. Infestations typically start near beds, but quickly spread throughout the room and to adjacent rooms.

Biting Behavior

A bed bug uses its elongated beak to pierce the skin and withdraw blood from a person. It takes about five to ten minutes for it to eat its fill, after which it drops and goes back into hiding. Bed bugs may bite any exposed part of the body. Some people have no reaction to the bite, while others develop itchy red welts and swelling either immediately or up to a week later. Bed bugs don't transmit diseases to people, but they can definitely interfere with sleep and make life miserable.

Is it a Bed Bug?

Before you take steps to eliminate or control bed bugs, make sure you actually have bed bugs. If people wake up with bites you may suspect bed

bugs, but other pests can bite in the night. Look in bedding, on curtains, behind loose wallpaper and molding, and in furniture for the live insects and for brown or reddish fecal spots. Compare the insects you find with pictures of bed bugs, or ask your local health department for help with identification.

Once you know for sure that you have bed bugs, you can make a plan to eliminate, or at least control, them. You may decide to use chemicals to control the infestation, but there's a lot you can do without pesticides. The next section is full of practical ways to deal with bed bugs.

Bye-Bye Bed Bugs

Following are suggestions to ridding your home of bed bugs. Many people have used these methods with success.

- Use mattress protectors to keep bugs from biting you in bed. A complete surround mattress cover that zips around and encases the entire mattress keeps bed bugs from getting in or out. They protect new mattresses from bugs and contain bed bugs that are already in older mattresses. Because they can live a long time without food the bed bugs may take several months to die, but they are imprisoned in the mattress protector so they can't bite you.

Zippered mattress protectors come in vinyl or cotton. A cotton mattress cover with a waterproof layer is a comfortable, breathable choice. You can also enclose pillows in pillow

protectors. Bed bugs and their eggs can make their way through tiny zipper holes, so it's important to put permanent tape over all the zippers.

- Reduce clutter in order to limit hiding places for bed bugs. Thoroughly clean the infested rooms and adjacent rooms. Use a powerful vacuum cleaner to pull bugs from cracks and crevices. Remove drawers and turn over furniture to find more hiding places.
- To keep bed bugs from getting onto beds, pull beds away from walls, keep sheets and blankets off the floor, and put the legs of beds in cups of mineral oil. You can use a regular cup or bowl or special a special cup within a cup designed specifically as a bed bug barrier. Caulk wall openings and cracks, including holes where pipes and wires go through walls.
- The best way to kill all the life stages of bed bugs in bedding and clothing is to put them in a clothes dryer for 10 to 20 minutes at medium to high heat. Manufacturers have developed portable heating units for items that can't go in a dryer, like books, shoes, and toys. Some people have reported success with loosely bagging items in plastic and putting them in a hot, sunny place—such as the inside of a car—for a day or more.
- You may have to throw out some heavily infested items, particularly beds, sofas, and other upholstered furniture, especially if they have holes or tears. To help prevent spreading the bugs, wrap the pieces in plastic before you dispose of them. To discourage people from taking the furniture home, make it

undesirable by damaging it, or put a warning note on it.

Moving away

If you are frustrated by trying to rid your home of bed bugs or tired of living with the pests, you may be tempted to move and start over. Be aware, however, that unless you are extremely careful you are likely to bring the bed bugs with you. You will have to make sure all your belongings are free from bed bugs before you move them into your new home, or throw out what you can't completely clean.

Don't panic

Remember, while they are annoying, irritating, and maybe embarrassing, bed bugs rarely pose any serious health risks. If you make a plan and follow through on the measures described above, you can get rid of them or at least keep them at a very manageable level.

Chapter 8: Bed Wetting and the Journey to Dry Mornings



Whether your child has just experienced his or her first bed wetting incident, or it has been happening for years, you are both likely encountering a barrage of emotions. You may feel alone in a journey that seems unending. But in truth, you're not. It is estimated that between 5 and 7 million people in the United States suffer from this life-altering problem. Because of this, a significant demand has been presented to the medical community. In return, we have been gifted with a wealth of information to better understand and treat this predominantly childhood complication. Here, we will outline what we know to be true about bed wetting, what you can do to curb its occurrence, and eventually, say goodbye to this nuisance once and for all.

A child that wets the bed is likely to experience emotional symptoms such as embarrassment, loneliness, and a fear of sleeping away from home. As a

parent, you may feel aggravated and helpless in offering any type of effective solution. As a teen or adult that continues to wet the bed, or has recently begun to wet the bed after a cessation, you may feel puzzled, worried, and again, helpless. As with any problem, the road to resolution begins with a deeper understanding of its cause. And as a circumstance steeped in complications that hold heavy emotional, esteem, and hygienic concerns, bed wetting is a problem worth addressing.

Bed wetting is diagnosed using two different medical terms – Primary Nocturnal Enuresis and Secondary Nocturnal Enuresis.

Primary Enuresis involves regular wetting of the bed, usually at least 2 times per month. Most prevalent in children ages toddler through 5, it is widely considered to be part of normal development for some children, and is quite common. Research shows that 15% percent of all 6-year-old children sleep with this problem, while 5% of 10-year-old children do the same.ⁱ It is more common for boys than girls, and sound sleepers tend to be more prone to bed wetting. If a child continues with a Primary Enuresis problem after the age of 6, studies suggest that only 15% of them will find relief by the age of 7. Sufferers over 15 years of age are likely to experience problems throughout their life, if they do not seek professional treatment.ⁱⁱ

It is important to understand that bed wetting is not a product of noncompliance, laziness, or emotional instability on the part of your child. As mentioned above, common bed wetting is

generally part of a developmental transition. Infants urinate throughout the night and day, with their bodies making no differentiation between waking and sleeping hours. They most often awake with a wet diaper. Adults' nervous systems are fully developed, sending signals from the bladder to the brain, asking them to awake and urinate. Even so, adults rarely need to arise to urinate during the night, due in part to Antidiuretic Hormone (ADH), which is secreted during sleep to reduce kidney output. Children that wet the bed are in transition between these two stages. When the development of the neurological and endocrine systems can accommodate the necessary signals, the bed wetting will cease. The most effective treatment needed in this, the most common case, is time.

Recognized Reasons for Primary Enuresis

Immature bladder muscles: Bed wetting occurs when the bladder is full, and the muscles that squeeze to release the urine are stronger than the one that maintains the urine (sphincter).

Small bladder: An underdeveloped bladder is culprit when it cannot hold all of the fluid that your child's body is producing. This, coupled with a deep sleep, equals a wet bed.

Too Much Liquid: Sometimes, even if your child's bladder is of adequate size, his body may produce more liquid than it can sustain.

Low ADH: As discussed above, Antidiuretic Hormone is necessary to curb nighttime kidney function.

Sleep Apnea: Occasionally, sleep apnea will display in children with symptoms such as snoring, ear and/or sinus infections, sore throat, daytime drowsiness, and bed wetting. A sleep apnea sufferer slips from deep sleep to light sleep again and again, and when this happens, the bladder sphincter relaxes, releasing urine.

Allergies: As with sleep apnea, allergies can cause a child to fall in and out of deep sleep, temporarily relaxing the bladder's sphincter muscle.

Physical Abnormalities: Rarely, bed wetting can occur as the result of a spinal cord, urethral valve, or ureter abnormality.

The underlying causes of Secondary Enuresis can be more difficult to pinpoint. Secondary Enuresis is bed wetting that manifests after a cessation of 6 months, or has commenced with no history of Primary Enuresis. An examination of your child's family and social situation should be the first order of business. Is he experiencing any life-changing issues such as divorce, a new baby, the loss of a close friend or family member, a new home, or bullying at school? If so, he should be given the opportunity to voice his feelings about the new situation, and if necessary, professional counseling should be sought. If not, a consultation with a medical doctor is in order. Sudden onset of Enuresis can indicate certain medical problems,

such as the development of diabetes, sleep apnea, or a urinary tract infection.

No matter your child's particular reason for wetting the bed, it is imperative that you not reprimand or belittle him for the behavior. It is not your child's fault. He simply cannot feel the full bladder. It is a common misconception that bed wetting is a foolproof indicator of emotional instability or anxiety. To the contrary, your child's own guilt or embarrassment resulting from reprimand can lead to emotional instability, anxiety, and behavior problems in waking hours. Your bed wetting child needs your reassurance that it's not his fault, and should be given the opportunity to express his feelings in a safe, non-threatening environment. Additionally, his assistance with cleaning up wet sheets and doing the laundry can provide him with a feeling of comfort through contribution, as long as it isn't used as a punishment.

It can also be helpful to talk openly with your child about anyone else in his family that may have experienced this problem. Bed wetting has been shown to be hereditary, so chances are, you will be able to think of someone else in your child's family with whom he can relate. Some children tend to internalize weakness, and convince themselves that they are alone. Knowing that they're not isolated can build self-esteem and reduce guilt. Studies have shown that if both parents have a history of bed wetting, children will have a 77% chance of experiencing a problem. If a lone parent had a problem, a 44% chance for the children. And if neither parent wet

the bed, the children still have a 15% chance of developing a bed wetting problem.ⁱⁱⁱ

If your child's bed wetting is developmental (under 6 years of age), and not a result of an underlying medical problem, there are some things that you can do to promote success.

Strategies to Promote Success

Curb Liquids: No drinks for 2 hours before bedtime.

Void Before Bed: Remind your child to urinate both at the beginning of his bedtime routine, and again just before climbing into bed.

Food Allergies: Components of your child's regular diet could be sabotaging your efforts. Caffeine, dairy, sugar, citrus, chocolate, red dyes, fast foods, preservatives, or artificial ingredients could be exacerbating the problem.

Eliminate these foods, one at a time, and watch for changes in bed wetting occurrences.

Bladder Exercises: Ask your child to practice holding his urine during the day – just for short periods before actually voiding (no need to run to the toilet at the first feeling of pressure). This will strengthen the bladder muscles.

More Sleep: Adding an extra 30 to 60 minutes of sleep could aid in your child's battle against bed wetting. Children that go to bed earlier have been shown to have fewer occurrences of

bed wetting. In addition, if your child has been diagnosed with sleep apnea, his doctor will likely recommend correction through one of a variety of methods.

Guided Imagery: During waking hours, ask your child to relax and close his eyes. Describe his internal organs and how they work (kidneys manufacture urine, bladder stores it, muscles hold it in, nerves send messages). Explain that urine is managing to escape at night because parts of his body aren't able to keep it in. Imagining proper bodily function can ready the brain for that function. If this method is ineffective after 2 weeks, discontinue or combine with another method.

Reward System: A calendar with stickers, for instance, can help to build nervous system communication through awareness. For every morning that your child awakes dry, he gives himself a small reward in preparation for a larger one. Remember that reprimand on wet mornings is never effective – only detrimental. As with guided imagery, if this method delivers no result with 2 weeks, discontinue or combine with another method.

Alarm: There are a number of bed wetting alarms available, designed to awaken a bed wetter to the fact that urination is taking place, bridging the gap between a full bladder and the child's brain. There are sensors that are placed in your child's underwear, or sensor pads placed under your child as he sleeps. Some systems offer special underwear with a sensor built in. Some

alarms are connected to the sensor with a wire and clipped to your child's pajamas. Other alarms are wireless and plugged into a wall outlet. They are designed to sense the first drop of urine and deliver light, vibration, or sound. Deep sleepers will not be awakened, but a signal will be sent to the brain to cease urination. It is then your responsibility to wake the child and escort him to the toilet. After 3-4 weeks, the alarm should awaken your child. After 12 weeks, the problem should be alleviated.

If your child is older than 6 years of age, the above listed techniques have not worked, bed wetting has suddenly resurfaced after a cessation of 6 months or more, or it is accompanied by daytime wetting, uncharacteristic bad behavior, or painful urination, a consultation with a Pediatrician is in order. During your initial consultation, the doctor will likely ask questions about your child's bathroom habits, daily schedule, and any recent lifestyle changes. A urinalysis (urine test) will probably be conducted.

A sudden bed wetting onset for a child or an adult could indicate a medical problem, such as infection, constipation, encopresis (uncontrollable bowels), diabetes, or severe stress. Normally, when the underlying medical problem is remedied, the bed wetting will cease.

If your child's bed wetting is the result of developmental or Primary Enuresis, medication may be prescribed. Desmopressin acetate (DDAVP) increases the level of Antidiuretic Hormone (ADH), reducing the production of

urine. Only the pill form has been approved by the FDA, and must be used with extreme caution. Serious side effects can be experienced, including seizure if accompanied by too much liquid. Imipramine is an antidepressant that may help to alleviate bed wetting symptoms by increasing the capacity of the bladder, but must also be handled with care, for an overdose could prove fatal. Anticholinergic drugs such as Ditropan reduce bladder contractions, but can result in a dry mouth and reddened face.

Homeopathic treatments may also be recommended by your child's doctor. Consultation with a trained homeopathic practitioner is advised. Though not approved by the FDA, these natural remedies are believed by some to strengthen the sphincter muscle, reduce inflammation, support kidney function, and reduce anxiety—without impact on the endocrine system. Equisetum (horsetail) has been used since ancient times in Chinese medicine, and is believed to offer the aforementioned advantages.

Other natural methods have been used to activate the neurological system. These practices include massage, acupressure, and acupuncture. As with any treatment, a professional in each particular field should be sought.

Though your child's wellbeing is your primary concern, the health of your home is also an issue when dealing with bed wetting. A mattress that gets wet can promote fungal growth and the population of odor-causing bacteria. To eliminate these problems, invest in a mattress pad or cover

that is both breathable and waterproof. This will ensure that the cover not only absorbs moisture, but protects the mattress from fluids, stains, odor-causing bacteria, and the breakdown of textiles. Most products available can be laundered and dried right along with the bed sheets.

In summary, the single most important thing to remember is this: Your child's bed wetting is not his fault. In most cases, it is simply the symptom of a transitional developmental stage, and with time and patience, will correct itself. In a smaller number of cases, a medical impediment is to blame. Using the information outlined above, offer support and understanding, or even medical attention if necessary.

As with most problems, there is an approach or method out there that may speed the eradication of your child's bed wetting behavior. Your biggest challenge will be in finding the method that works best for your child. Whatever it is, combining it with patience, understanding, and a generous helping of time will make for a more successful run. And when you finally do experience that long sought-after success, your entire household will be sleeping soundly and waking to joyfully dry mornings.

i www.kidshealth.org

ii www.drgreene.org

iii www.drgreene.org

Chapter 9: Eliminate Back Pain



Back pain. It's nothing to some, a nuisance to many, and an inconvenience to a few — right?

Well, not exactly. When you look at the statistics, you'll realize that back pain is a serious issue in today's society — far more serious than most people realize! How serious, you ask? According to the *American Chiropractic Association*, right now more than 31 million North Americans are experiencing lower back pain. And that's to say nothing of the upper back and neck!

Still not convinced that back pain is more than a trifle? Consider these facts:

- Back pain is among the most common reasons for missed work days
- Back pain is the second most common reason people seek medical attention (respiratory infections being the first)
- For most people, your back begins to age before you reach thirty
- Back pain is chronic: most people who get it, get it again
- Canadians spend more than \$50 billion each year trying to combat back pain
- After heart disease and cancer, back pain is the most expensive ailment to treat
- The American Chiropractic Association estimates that 80% of people will have problems with their backs at some point during their lives

When you look at these facts, three things become obvious:

1. At some point in your life, you'll probably experience back pain
2. Back pain is an expensive and painful condition
3. Back pain costs billions of dollars each year (especially if you take into account all those missed work days!)

For many people, back pain is a serious, painful, and chronic condition severely affecting their ability to engage in normal activities.

What is Back Pain?

On the surface, that might seem a simple answer: back pain is when your back hurts! But there's far more to back pain than pain itself. More to the point, there are dozens of associated problems that come hand-in-hand with a sore back. To complicate the matter, back pain doesn't necessarily indicate any kind of serious condition. On the other hand, serious conditions often have back pain as a symptom! Confused yet? Your back is a complicated piece of engineering.

How Your Back Works: Your back is a series of stacked bones (vertebrae) that compose your spine. These bones do for your spinal cord what your skull does for your brain: they protect the extremely important and delicate nerves within. Small sections of your spinal cord squeeze through spaces in the vertebrae, allowing them to carry information to the rest of your body.

Muscles and tendons bind those vertebrae together. Your spine also has built-in "shock absorbers" called discs. These rest between your vertebrae and prevent strain and damage when you engage in high-impact physical activity (things like running, dancing, or jumping).

Even though you have a single spine running through your back, you can think of the muscles and tendons as divided into two categories: lower and upper.

Lower Back Pain: Your lower back is anything from around your midsection down to your hips. Lower back pain is the most common complaint

doctors hear about. It can manifest as a sharp sensation in the small of your back or a more general ache, and it has many causes.

Because your spine is such a central part of your body, your lower back muscles extend into your legs and abdomen. For that reason, low back pain can also result in shooting pain in your legs or bouts of nausea. Unfortunately, a 2005 study by Toronto Western Hospital Research found that less than a third of lower back pain cases get better over the course of a year. That means that if you're experiencing back pain, it's hard to get rid of.

Upper Back Pain: Upper back pain is less common than lower back pain, but it can be even more problematic. When we talk about your upper back, we're including your shoulders and neck. As computer usage increases, neck pain and shoulder pain increase too.

As with your lower back, your upper back muscles extend into other parts of your body. Side effects of upper back pain include severe headaches, pain in your arms, and lower back tension.

Types of Back Pain: The first thing most doctors will ask you if you seek treatment for back pain is where the pain is located. The next thing they'll want to discuss is whether the pain is chronic or acute.

Acute pain refers to a specific injury. If you're in a car accident and get whiplash, that's acute. Chronic pain is pain that doesn't go away. If

you've experienced pain in the same location more or less steadily for 3 - 6 months, you're dealing with a chronic condition. And when we're talking back pain, acute injuries have a way of becoming chronic in a hurry.

The Results of Chronic Back Pain

If only back pain limited itself to the back! Unfortunately, it has a tendency to spread. Back pain affects you physically, psychologically, and emotionally in ways you never would have imagined. Just a few of the side effects of chronic back pain include:

- poor sleep patterns
- reduced immunity to illness
- growing stiffness in the rest of the body (as your other joints try to compensate for the reduced movement in your back)
- headaches and nausea
- pain in your limbs
- irritability, depression, and other emotional disorders
- reduced ability to work
- reduced ability to do physical activities

Unfortunately, many of these problems create a vicious cycle. For example, back pain reduces your desire and ability to engage in physical activity. Physical activity, though, is key to maintaining a healthy spine. As you can see, as your symptoms worsen, your quality of life can decrease significantly.

What Causes Back Pain?

There are many causes of back pain, some common, others less so. If you had an initiating event (like an injury or accident), you'll probably pinpoint the cause easily. For many people, though, back pain is a constant in their lives, and they have no idea why!

Hopefully, this list will help you understand the mechanics of back pain.

1. Injury: Injury is an extremely common cause of back pain. When we talk about injury, we're covering a wide variety of damage to a muscle or bone. A back injury can range from a strained muscle to a severed spinal cord resulting in full paralysis. Of course, if we're talking about back pain, we're probably not dealing with something of that severity.

Car accidents often result in neck injuries. When your head is unsupported, the force of the impact can seriously damage the muscles of your upper back. Most people associate this with whiplash, but while whiplash is the most common neck injury, it isn't the only one. A car accident can do far more damage to your back than a case of whiplash.

Work related injuries are also extremely common causes of back pain. This is especially true in situations where your job requires a lot of heavy lifting. Less common, but just as painful, are athletic injuries. Most of the time, these come from moving the wrong way — zigging when you should have zagged, so to speak.

On the other hand, injuries can come from much more common causes. Carrying heavy handbags or backpacks, being extremely overweight, and not using care when lifting things can result in chronic back injuries. Physical inactivity can also create serious problems for your back: when your muscles are weak, they're more likely to get injured.

2. Medical: There are a number of medical conditions that cause back pain. Some of these include:

- **Osteoarthritis:** Osteoarthritis occurs when the discs between your vertebrae disintegrate so that bone rubs against bone every time you move. Athletes often suffer from osteoarthritis since it builds up over years of high-impact activity. However, obesity and prior back injuries also increase your risk osteoarthritis.
- **Osteoporosis:** We've all heard of this one (drink your milk!). As you age, your bones can begin to lose calcium, making them weaker. When a person with osteoporosis engages in physical activity, the weak front of the vertebrae can crack or fracture slightly. If this continues over time, it results in serious and intense back pain.
- **Slipped Disc:** Also known as a hernia, a slipped disc is exactly what it sounds like: an injury resulting in one of the discs slipping from between your vertebrae and coming to rest against a nerve. Nerves are there to sense pain — that's one of their main functions. If something is constantly resting against one of them, your body will let you know in a hurry.

- **Serious Illness:** In rare instances, back pain can indicate a very serious problem: kidney infections, cancer, diabetes, or, in the case of the neck, meningitis. If you experience prolonged back pain, and it doesn't seem to respond to self-treatment, you should see a doctor.

3. Posture: Remember how your parents and schoolteachers always told you to “sit up straight?” You should have listened! We spend a lot of time sitting down, and almost none of us do it properly. When you slouch, your muscles readjust to accommodate this “new” posture. Unfortunately, they're accommodating in ways they were never meant to grow. That means when you use them the way they're supposed to be used, they can't handle the movement.

Even worse, you might have poor posture in your sleep! If your mattress sags, or doesn't provide the proper support, you could be causing serious damage to your back at night. Most of the time, we associate lying down with taking the pressure off your back. If you don't have the right mattress and pillow, though, you can actually make the problem worse — which is why experts don't recommend sleeping on the couch.

Your mattress and pillow are at least as important as your shoes. Think about it: you spend about eight hours a night — a third of your day — in bed. If you're using an improper mattress, or one that doesn't provide adequate support, then instead of allowing your muscles to rest during the night, you're forcing them to work even

harder to support your unnatural position. A good mattress and pillow are essential to keeping your back healthy and strong.

4. Stress: Your emotional health has a serious impact on your body. Stress can cause all sorts of crazy reactions in people, including illness, changes in appetite and sleep, and physical pain. Because many people tighten their back muscles when they're worried or upset, stress can seriously aggravate existing pain or even create its own.

Preventing Back Pain

Maybe you're one of the lucky 20% who will never have back problems. But it's more than likely that, if you haven't had problems yet, you will at some point in the future. As we've seen, back pain can be extremely debilitating, so your best bet is prevention! There are many things you can do to limit your chances of injuring your back.

1. Exercise caution when lifting or bending: Most, lower back injuries are the result of improper lifting. You aren't Superman: there's no shame in getting help to lift something heavy! Trust me, your macho image will suffer a lot more from spending three days in bed than asking for a hand.

If you are lifting something yourself, think about your posture. You've heard it said, “Lift with your knees.” All that means is, when you're lifting something heavy from the ground, you should bend your knees instead of hinging forward from your waist. If you hinge forward, all of your

lifting strength comes from your back. Bend at the knees, and your thighs and quads get to take some of the burden.

2. Rest your head against the seat when driving: It's called a headrest for a reason! Most neck injuries occur when the head snaps rapidly forward and back. If you drive with your head back, resting against the seat, then it can't snap as far forward and can't snap backwards at all. It might feel a bit awkward at first, but it comes with an added benefit: improved posture while driving!

3. Sit properly, especially if seated for long periods: If you have a desk or computer job, you might have to spend a lot of time in a chair. Sit properly! Keep your feet flat on the floor and your back straight — not painfully, just don't slouch.

4. Make sure your computer equipment is properly adjusted: If you spend a lot of time typing, you should be able to face your screen head-on, not at an angle. Make sure your desk, chair, and keyboard are at a proper height.

5. Invest in good shoes: This is especially true if you're on your feet all day, and even more so if you're a woman who tends toward high heels. If your shoes are uncomfortable, you aren't standing properly, which leads to bad posture, and so on.

6. Live a healthy lifestyle: Maintaining a healthy body weight and engaging in physical

activity are both keys to preventing back pain. Exercise also helps ward off osteoporosis, another major source of pain. People who exercise regularly tend to experience less back pain and recover from it more quickly when they do. In fact, many doctors recommend, "exercise therapy" when dealing with back and neck injuries: strengthening the muscles around the injured area and building the entire body's health.

7. Stretch when exercising: A few minutes stretching your back before and after you work it will make all the difference in the world!

8. Take time to relax: Since stress can exercise such influence over your body, it's important that you take the time to manage it. Whatever keeps you emotionally grounded, whether that's a spiritual activity, a hot bath, or a night out with the guys, it's essential that you do it. If you're too busy to give yourself a couple hours a week, then you're too busy.

9. Invest in a good mattress: As we've already established, your mattress and pillow are essential to providing proper lumbar support while you sleep. If your mattress is saggy or overly soft, your back has to work hard all night long. Have you ever woken up stiff and sore? Now you know why! The ideal mattress is firm and comfortable, providing good support for your entire body (i.e., it shouldn't sag when you lie on it).

Good sleep is important for other reasons, too! Yes, a bad mattress means back pain, but it can

also mean less sleep, lower immunities, and irritability. Your bed is worth the investment.

Treating Back Pain

If you already suffer from chronic back pain, you know how difficult it can be. Unfortunately, in many cases there is no “cure” for back pain. You can, however, treat your pain. You might not get rid of it completely, but you can reduce it to a manageable extent. In fact, many people with chronic back pain are amazed at what a difference a few lifestyle changes can make!

When to See a Doctor: Many people try to manage pain of all kinds on their own. To a certain extent, that’s a good thing: you don’t have to run to the hospital for a bruised shin! But there are times when you do need medical attention, and back pain can indicate one of those times. See a doctor immediately if:

- Your back pain comes with a fever and a sense of illness
- You have numbness or pain extending down your legs
- You are over sixty and experience extreme pain when moving
- You have blood in your urine
- You have a history of cancer
- Your legs are weak/ you have difficulty standing
- You have pain in your legs that gets worse when you bend or raise your legs toward your chest
- The pain doesn’t go away over an extended period, or the pain gets worse and worse

These symptoms can indicate anything from a kidney infection to a fractured spine. In all probability, there’s nothing seriously wrong. However, if any of the above apply to you, it’s better to be safe than sorry! Make a doctor’s appointment as soon as possible.

Helping Yourself: If you want to try addressing the back pain yourself, there are certain steps you can take before seeing a doctor.

1. Apply heat or ice to the affected area: If you think you may be dealing with a minor injury (such as a strain or twisted muscle), give yourself a few days. Apply heat to relax the muscle and ice to reduce swelling. If the pain is quite bad, you might also want to consider taking an anti-inflammatory painkiller, such as ibuprofen.

2. Improve your posture: Bad posture is a lifelong habit, and it can be difficult to correct. One tip that might help you is to slide a small pillow or rolled-up sweater behind the small of your back when sitting. This provides support and prevents you from slouching.

3. Buy comfortable shoes: Invest a bit of money in shoes that will support you comfortably throughout your day. Look for flat shoes or a very low heel, comfort, and support. You should feel stable in your shoes, not as though you’re about to slip.

4. Buy a good mattress: Invest in a proper mattress that will help you heal while you sleep instead of injuring you further. Mattresses are

good investments, but they should be replaced every 8 –10 years. If you’ve had yours longer than that, it’s definitely time for a change!

Things to look for when buying a mattress:

- **Comfort.** Usually, comfort comes from the padding above the springs. Test mattresses in the position you normally sleep in, don’t just flop down and pronounce it good!
- **Support.** A mattress’s coils and springs provide support. Make sure you understand the mattress type: different brands have different numbers and tensions of springs.
- **Flexibility.** The reason we recommend sleeping on a mattress and not on the floor is that you can have too firm a product! Your mattress shouldn’t just provide support; it should allow for your body’s natural curves. Most of the time, a medium-firm mattress is preferable to a firm mattress.
- **Value.** Just as “cheap” doesn’t mean “inferior,” “expensive” doesn’t mean “quality.” Most of the time, though, you will pay more for a good mattress than a bad one. It’s just common sense. Keep in mind, you’ll spend a lot of time on this bed: the investment is worth it. Just make sure you shop around and get the best value possible!

Once you have your mattress, take care of it by flipping and rotating it periodically. Not only will it last longer, you’ll have a more comfortable sleep!

You should also make sure that your pillow allows your head to remain in alignment with the

rest of your spine. Also consider using pillows to supplement your posture. A pillow tucked under your knees, for instance, can help your spine curve more naturally while you sleep.

Getting Help: Sometimes, back pain reaches a point where it’s unmanageable by yourself. At that point, it’s time to seek the advice of professionals.

1. Medical doctors: Your medical doctor is usually your first stop for back pain. He or she can rule out medical causes, prescribe painkillers, and refer you to therapists or specialists.

2. Chiropractors: Some people are very suspicious of chiropractors while others swear by them. Talk to people you know and find a chiropractor you trust. You can go in for a consultation if you’re not comfortable making an actual appointment the first time.

3. Exercise instructors: If the pain doesn’t prevent you, begin simple stretches or exercises to increase back strength. Yoga is particularly good for people with back injuries. However, if you’re suffering from back pain, you should seek a professional instructor. That way you can make sure you’re doing the exercises properly and not damaging your back further.

You may also want to consult an exercise therapist, who might be able to set up a program to help you build strength and reduce pain.

4. Massage therapists: Massage can be very effective in treating back pain.

Life Goes On

Back pain can have a terrible impact on your daily life. Fortunately, there are many treatments and practices available. Keeping active, taking care of your body, and buying and maintaining a good mattress are just a few of the ways you can manage pain and keep your day-to-day life as normal as possible.

Don't let back pain rule your life. Find ways to treat it. Make sure you eat, sleep, and exercise properly, and you'll be amazed at the changes you'll see not only in your back, but in your overall well-being.

Chapter 10: Improve Your Circulation



What is Circulation?

Circulation is the system in the body which moves nutrients, gases and waste products to and from the cells in your body. There are two types of fluids that circulate these products inside the body. The continual flow of blood throughout the body is known as the cardiovascular system. The continual flow of Lymph through lymph vessels and lymph nodes is known as the lymphatic system. Together they make up the circulation system.

Blood flows into the heart, is delivered to the lungs for oxygenation, returns to the heart, and then is sent through branching arteries to reach all of the microscopic vessels within the body. The blood then returns via the veins and enters the heart again. This movement is necessary to maintain the

proper supply of oxygen from the lungs, nutrients to the tissues and the distribution of hormones.

Blood contained in the vessels of an adult, at rest, complete the circuit in about a minute. The blood circulates approximately 1500 times a day. This increases during exercise in fit young people briefly and even more in elite endurance athletes. The quantity of blood flowing through each organ or region is regulated according to its own physiological requirement.

The Lymphatic system is a major part of the body's immune system.

History

The concept of blood circulation is attributed to William Harvey. He presented evidence that the blood flowed in arteries, out from the heart, then to the tissues and back along the veins. Harvey based his conclusions on a number of experiments that he conducted and then demonstrated to colleagues. One of his experiments was on an arm that he let hang by the side squeezing the upper arm so the veins stood out. He used a finger to press on the vein and held it there. He used another finger to press just above the first and moved along the vein to release the blood toward the heart then released it. He found that the vein couldn't be filled from the heart even when pressure had been applied. This theory challenged the teachings of Galen in the second century AD who believed that blood passed on the right to the left side.

Circulation

About 15% of the resting blood flow and circulation supply the brain. This flow is vital to brain functions. The brain cannot withstand more than a few seconds of interruption of flow without loss of consciousness. Longer interruption can cause irreversible damage.

Brain blood flow is constant, although regional changes occur in response to changes in neuronal activity. As an example, shining a light in the eye will result in an increase in blood flow to the region of the brain that cares for vision.

Due to gravity, blood pressure in the brain is lower than anywhere else. The brain blood flow is determined by the diameter of blood vessels which in turn are controlled by a system of nerves. During exercise, muscles produce several chemicals which are end products of its metabolic activity. This activity dilates vessels and regulates blood flow so it is appropriate for the level of activity for the individual.

The coronary arteries supply blood to the heart muscle. The heart removes nearly all the oxygen from the coronary blood at rest. The nerves supplying the coronary vessels do not dilate these vessels during work (exercise) but provide more oxygen to the heart by increasing the circulation through the vessel. If there is blockage in the coronary artery, there is coronary insufficiency and heart pain occurs.

Blood flow to the skin controls temperature regulation. If your body temperature rises, skin

vessels dilate to increase skin blood flow and circulation increasing skin temperature and facilitating cooling. Skin blood flow is controlled by nerves and direct local temperature effects. During very cold conditions blood flow to the entire skin is almost completely cut off. During extreme heat, flow may increase to the extent that most of the output of the heart flows to the skin to help cool the body.

If your circulation is poor, your body could experience all sorts of pain and discomfort as time progresses. Thankfully there are many things you can do to try and help ease this suffering. Circulation problems and disorders are common in middle-aged people and older, but they can happen to anyone. Here are some of the issues that may happen as a result of poor circulation:

Hypertension is caused by cholesterol and plaque deposits along the walls of your arteries which make them harden. Blood has to exert extra force against the walls of blood vessels which will cause your blood pressure to rise.

Varicose veins are the result of poor circulation. These veins develop because of elasticity loss within the walls of the veins. Circulation problems may happen because of having a bad diet, lack of exercise and high stress.

Arteries can harden as a result of the narrowing of the blood vessels. Those who smoke can also have an inflammation of the veins in the lower portion of their body. Over time this causes cracks and bleeding to occur within the circulatory system,

especially in the stressful areas around the heart, in the bends of arteries and in the neck and legs.

A breakdown of the cells that make up the lining of veins and arteries can cause heart disease. As the damage occurs, your liver begins to mass-produce cholesterol to stop up the holes. If the body doesn't receive the nutrients necessary to repair the damage, the blockage continually gets bigger and will eventually cause a heart attack.

Symptoms

Here is a list of symptoms associated with poor blood circulation.

Tingling, burning and numbness in the feet or hands. This could also show symptoms by no feeling at all in the feet or hands.

- Low energy
- Irregular heart beats
- Shortness of breath
- Memory problems
- Lack of stamina or ability to complete a task

Effects of Poor Blood Circulation

Poor blood circulation is one of many disorders experienced by an ever-increasing number of citizens. Poor blood circulation can contribute to the following:

- Arthritis
- High LDL cholesterol
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Chest pain
- Heart Disease
- Relief

When circulation problems occur, arthritis, back pain, hernia, heartburn and insomnia symptoms may increase. There are a number of things that you can do to help your circulation difficulties. Poor or bad circulation does not have to ruin your life.

Hot and Cold Treatments

Hot showers and cold showers can also improve your circulation. It's something that you can do fairly easily and do every day, concentrating on the area that is causing you the most issues or pain. A hot shower allows the blood to rush to that area and circulate. After that, run the cold water on the same area. This will send the blood circulating into the body. It may give you a sensation when your blood flushes out your skin. Your circulation may improve just by this simple action. You can repeat the hot and cold water as often as you like but build up to extremely hot or extremely cold water over a few weeks so it's not painful or a shock to your system. Hot and cold water therapy can really help improve your circulation and over time you can see a great deal of improvement in your pain.

Mattress

Your mattress may also be a contributor to poor circulation. Flat lifeless beds can cause pressure points cause pain to certain areas of your body. You may need to continually move during the night to stay comfortable.

There are number of beds to choose from such as adjustable, and memory foam mattresses. There are even some beds that can treat burn victims. Buying a new mattress may help assist you. Some conditions such as hypertension, circulation problems, ulcers, or congestive heart failure, can be relieved to some degree.

People with asthma, acid reflux disorder, heart failure, or chronic lung disease need to elevate the head of the bed. It is best to ask your physician what will be best for your specific situation. Sleeping surfaces may make a difference in people with sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea, snoring, or insomnia because they are very sensitive to distractions.

Heat and massage are some of the possibilities when it comes to new mattress. Some mattress give relief from symptoms of low back pain, poor local blood circulation of the legs, edema or swelling of the legs, minor pains caused by muscular fatigue, nighttime heartburn, and tension. Anytime you add heat or vibration to your body, it does affect circulation.

Some people love to have a hard mattress and can be comfortable anywhere, like in a chair or on the floor. Most times, after laying on these

types of surfaces, you awake feeling beat up and battered. There is no truth to harder mattresses are better. Sometimes you need added support and relief from pressures. Firm rather than soft is generally better for people with disc pathology or arthritis. A standard mattress will provide the best sleep for you. People with cervical arthritis should avoid using a lot of pillows.

Memory foam mattresses are the best for anyone with back pain or osteoarthritis. Memory foam remembers the contours of your body and the foam itself is made of heat and pressure sensitive material that will respond to your body temperature. Memory foam mattress conforms to your body with almost perfect pressure, weight distribution, and support creating a weightless sleep.

There are a number of manufacturers that make memory foam mattresses or top conventional mattresses with a layer of it which helps the mattresses price drop.

Air mattresses absorb rather than resist pressure to provide a sleeping surface that accepts your body contours and distributes the pressure evenly. Sleep Number beds enable two people to adjust firmness on their side of the bed. Sleeping on air does offer great support. If you can adjust the firmness in your mattress, you can get a great night's sleep.

When you decide to purchase a new mattress, try as many mattresses as possible. Take your favorite pillow with you. Allow yourself to spend time

lying on the mattress. Wear comfortable cloths, take your shoes off, and ask the sales people to give you some time. Take your bed partner, it's best to do this together. This will help you determine how your body feels. Is the mattress comfortable? Does your body heat leave or is it elevated? Does it give you support, but needs a bit of cushioning? You may want to add a mattress foam topper, feather bed to the mattress, or you may want to try a mattress with a memory foam topper.

A mattress is the right choice when it feels right to you, and you alone. Every person has their own preference.

Herbs

Cayenne Pepper can be a great way to address a circulation problem. Cayenne is of the species *Capsicum*, which has been used as a stimulant, digestive, and antiseptic medicine throughout time. Cayenne can be used externally for people with poor circulation. *Capsicum* based creams and oils can be rubbed onto the skin to help with circulation. Be sure to avoid getting the herb in your eyes or any of sensitive area of your body.

If taken internally, cayenne can stimulate the heart. It can regulate the blood flow and help to strengthen your arteries. If you take a cayenne tincture, you will get your blood pumping and strengthen your heart and circulation. Research also shows that hot herbs such as cayenne can increase your metabolic rate as much as 25 percent which can also assist you with weight loss.

Ginkgo Biloba is a circulation booster. It is widely known for the ability to improve memory. It improves memory by increasing blood flow through the brain. Similar to cayenne, Ginkgo Biloba improves blood flow and strengthens blood vessels. Ginkgo Biloba is also anti-inflammatory herb. It relaxes the lungs, improves blood circulation to the heart and lessens demand for oxygen. This helps to reduce shortness of breath which is helpful with asthma symptoms. Ginkgo Biloba can be used to treat poor circulation, thrombosis, varicose veins, cramp, and any spontaneous bruising that you may have.

A regular intake of Garlic may lower the cholesterol levels in your blood. Garlic is thought to help cleanse your blood. Garlic may also help reduce high blood pressure.

Ginger stimulates all tissues of the body. It is great for poor circulation problems. Ginger, Garlic, Ginkgo Biloba and Cayenne in a tincture can be easily and quickly absorbed by the body.

Onions can increase blood circulation. Onions are a close relative to Garlic. An onion can also relax muscles. Some people eat an onion daily if they are in the risk category for heart disease and circulation problems.

Other Treatments

Acupuncture: According to acupuncturists, poor circulation usually results from an energy blockage related to the heart meridian, so treatment would concentrate on this meridian.

A course of six to eight sessions of acupuncture are recommended to improve circulation in the affected area.

Homeopathy: There are many common homeopathy remedies for poor circulation.

Hamamelis: For Varicose veins which appear during pregnancy Pulsatilla is recommended.

For Arteriosclerosis in an elderly person also suffering from high blood pressure Baryta carb is recommended.

Summary

Circulation is very important to the overall health of your body. Your circulation affects all portions of your body. Left untreated, poor circulation may result in high blood pressure, heart disease and decreased gland functions.

There are many ways to try and improve poor circulation.

Water treatments such as hot and cold water pressure on the afflicted area can immediately improve your circulation. Be careful to not use extreme temperatures when using this therapy.

Your mattress may also be the cause of the aches and pains. You should find out as much as you can about how beds and mattress may be affecting your body. Back pain may be associated with old or improper choice in a mattress. Your bed should support your back properly while you sleep at night. Hard mattresses or beds are not always the

way to go. Just because they are harder, it does not mean they are supporting you. Make sure you try out mattresses in as similar a situation to your night time routine as possible. Find out how each mattress works and what the benefits are, so you can help your situation while you are sleeping at night.

Everyday herbs may also help you with poor circulation problems. Ginger, Garlic, Ginkgo Biloba, Onion and Cayenne taken internally or externally may treat various circulation problems. In addition, you can try some of the homeopathic medications to help with poor circulations. Acupuncture is also a possibility to help with circulatory issues.

These are some options to help combat poor circulation. Don't procrastinate any longer, start today.

Chapter 11: Effective Solutions to Snoring



Almost everyone snores from time to time whether they are aware of it or not. You may have even noticed that your pet snores from time to time. Babies have been known to snore as young as a few weeks of age. Obviously snoring can be quite common; however, it can also result in a number of problems. In some cases, snoring can become so loud that it disturbs one's sleeping partner. This can result in problems within the relationship as well as problems concentrating at work due to a lack of sleep. The occurrence of heavy snoring can also lead to many serious health issues. Learning and understanding the causes of snoring as well as possible solutions can not only provide an improvement in one's health but also relationships and provide better sleep quality.

Causes of Snoring

Snoring is most commonly caused by the airways in the throat and nose narrowing during sleep. As a result, the air which is inhaled and exhaled must be pushed through a much smaller passageway. This results in the noise that we commonly know as snoring; generally caused by the loose tissue located within the back of the throat vibrating.

Studies have revealed that individuals who are prone to snoring commonly have an excess amount of nasal and mouth tissue or have tissue which is looser than normal, thus resulting in a tendency of the tissue to vibrate. It is for this same reason that an individual who is overweight may be prone to snoring. Obesity is commonly associated with additional fat tissue in the throat and neck. This extra tissue can obstruct the individual's airways, also causing snoring.

In some cases, the position of the individual's tongue can also result in snoring. This is because when the tongue is positioned incorrectly, it can interfere with the normal breathing process. When the breathing process is not smooth, the person may also be more prone to snoring.

It should be noted that not all of the causes of snoring are within the control of the individual. The tendency to snore can be inherited. Some individuals inherit a narrowed airway, which can increase their tendency to snore. When this is the cause of an individual snoring, the cause is not actually within the control of the snorer. That said; however, there are solutions which can be

utilized to reduce the tendency to snore, despite the presence of a smaller airway.

While women can certainly have problems snoring, surveys have shown that snoring does tend to be more prevalent in men than in women. This is because of the fact that men naturally have a smaller air passage than women. As a result they are naturally more likely to have problems snoring than women.

In many cases, people may notice that they have an increased tendency to snore when they have a cold or some other health issue such as a sinus infection, asthma or allergies. This can occur even in people who do not normally tend to snore when they are healthy. These types of health conditions can result in the nasal airway becoming blocked. Inhalation can then become difficult. Noisy breathing, or snoring, is often the result.

In some cases, individuals who have never previously had a problem with snoring may develop a tendency to snore as they age. This typically occurs with the onset of middle-age. As individuals become older, the throat naturally becomes narrower. In addition, the muscle tone that is present within the throat becomes reduced as well. Both of these factors can result in an increased tendency to snore.

A history of smoking or even exposure to second-hand smoke can also make an individual more prone to snoring. This is because individuals who smoke or who are exposed to smoke tend

to experience muscles within the throat that are more relaxed. Smoking and smoke exposure also tends to result in lung and nasal congestion, which can lead to snoring.

Alcohol and medications may also play a role in snoring. Certain types of medications as well as alcohol can also cause the throat and tongue muscles to become relaxed. When these muscles are more relaxed the chance of snoring increases.

The severity of snoring can vary. In some cases it can be quite mild. Generally, when snoring is mild, the noise will stop when the individual changes their position or they wake up. Of course, even mild snoring can be disruptive to both the snorer as well as their sleep partner because the sleep partner may tend to nudge the snorer in an effort to get them to wake up or change positions to stop the snoring. As a result, both may experience a lower quality of sleep.

Snoring can also be severe. When snoring is severe the individual may suffer from snoring that is continual. In this case, the snoring typically does not stop when the individual changes position. Severe snoring can be quite loud and last throughout the night.

Effects of Snoring

Many individuals who snore claim that it does not interfere with their quality of sleep. In fact, they often question why it is such a problem for their sleep partner due to the fact that their own snoring never awakens them. This is because many individuals who snore tend to be deep or

heavy sleepers. Even if their snoring does not disturb them it often does destroy the ability of their sleep partner to receive a good night's sleep.

As a result, the realities of snoring can cause serious repercussions in relationships. As a result of continual snoring, the snorer's sleep partner may experience excessive fatigue and may be cranky. This can create problems within the relationship. Studies indicate that individuals who share a bed with someone who snores, can easily be awakened nearly two dozen times per hour. As a result, sleep partners of snorers may make the decision to sleep in a different room. This can have a profound effect on the relationship because it can interrupt physical intimacy as well as the bedtime chatting that is common with most couples. The sleep partner tends to feel resentful, irritable and exhausted. The snorer often tends to experience feelings of frustration and isolation. Over time, these feelings can place a tremendous strain on the relationship; resulting in even greater anxiety on the part of both persons.

In addition to relationship problems, snoring can also lead to serious health issues. The most common health problem of individuals who snore is lack of sleep. Even though they may not be aware of it, people who snore may awaken frequently. Although they may not awaken due to their own snoring, they do tend to be jostled or nudged frequently by their sleep partner in an effort to stop the snoring. This can result in sleep deprivation that may lead to exhausted, irritability as well as a lack of productivity at work and school. The possibility of an auto accident

also exists when an individual does not receive adequate sleep.

Snoring can also lead to other health issues including a reduced oxygen supply to the individual's brain. This can result in health problems such as heart disease, stroke, hypertension, high blood pressure and Type II diabetes. Concentration and the ability to focus on tasks at hand can also occur when the individual is not receiving an adequate supply of oxygen to the brain.

Discovering the cause of snoring is always important due to the fact that the presence of snoring can often indicate an underlying health issue. One of the most common underlying causes of snoring is a sleep disorder known as sleep apnea. This condition can be life threatening. Many causes of snoring result from narrowed airways. In the case of sleep apnea, the individual suffers from a breathing obstruction. This is quite different from a narrowed passageway. In a narrowed passageway, the airway is not completely blocked. There is simply less space available for the air way pass through. When a breathing obstruction is present, the airway is completely blocked.

As a result of this disorder, the individual tends to stop breathing altogether and must awaken in order to actually begin breathing again. As a result, people who suffer from sleep apnea tend to awaken numerous times per night so that they can begin breathing again, even though they may have no recollection of this the next

day. The individual's sleep partner does tend to be aware of these occurrences; however, because they are often awakened at the same time the snorer must awaken to restart their breathing. Sleep apnea can be life threatening due to the risk that the individual may not awaken to restart their breathing.

While snoring is the most common symptom of this condition, it should be noted that the presence of snoring alone does not always indicate the presence of this condition. In fact, individuals who suffer from mild snoring will not involve any type of breathing cessation. Individuals who are concerned that they may suffer from this disorder should speak with their physician in order to determine whether their snoring is the result of sleep apnea or some other cause. A sleep study may be necessary to properly diagnose or rule out the presence of sleep apnea.

Persons who suffer from mild snoring can receive benefit from many different types of solutions. Finding an effective solution can provide improved sleep quality for both the snorer and their sleep partner. When the quality of sleep is improved, the quality of life and the intimacies of a relationship can frequently be restored.

Solutions for Snoring

There are many different types of solutions that can be quite effective, depending on the exact cause of the snoring. If the individual is overweight, losing weight can be quite effective because it can reduce the amount of fatty tissue that is present within the airway. Improving one's

physical activity and reducing portion sizes can lead to improved fitness and ultimately better breathing and sleeping at night.

Persons who smoke may also find relief by quitting while individuals who are exposed to smoke can find relief by reducing their exposure to second-hand smoke.

In some cases it may be necessary to change one's sleep posture. Individuals who sleep on their back tend to experience increased problems with snoring due to the fact that when sleeping in this position the soft tissues that are located at the back of the throat have a tendency to block the airway. Changing to a different sleeping position, such as sleeping on one or the other side, may provide some relief. Specially designed sleeping devices, including body pillows can make it easier to learn how to sleep in a different position.

Elevating one's head can also provide relief. Specially constructed pillows designed especially for snorer's can assist the individual in elevating their head so that their airways are not blocked during sleep.

In some cases, taking certain medication or eating certain foods right before bedtime may exacerbate the tendency to snore. Drinking alcohol at night can also result in an increased tendency to snore. You may find that avoiding certain foods and cutting back or avoiding alcohol at night can provide relief. One of the primary reasons that alcohol triggers snoring is the fact that it tends to relax certain muscles within the

airways. Tranquilizers and sleeping pills can have the same result.

Foods which are dairy based and contain a high amount of fat can also trigger snoring as can soy milk products. High fat dairy and soy products can prevent mucus from draining, resulting in snoring. Persons who enjoy a late night snack may try switching to skim milk to achieve relief.

Clearing your nasal passages can also provide relief, particularly if you suffer from allergies, sinus problems or you have a cold. One possible solution is the use of nasal decongestants before going to bed at night. These products can allow you to breathe more easily, reducing the noisy breathing commonly associated with snoring. Individuals who are concerned about taking decongestants may also wish to try homeopathic solutions such as nasal strips which can assist in opening the nasal passageways. Remember; however, that the use of antihistamines frequently results in the relaxation of throat muscles, which can exacerbate breathing problems and snoring.

Finding effective solutions for snoring cannot also produce a better quality of sleep but can also improve one's quality of life and relationships as well.

Chapter 12: Take Control of Your Asthma



What is Asthma?

Most people who suffer from asthma are all too familiar with its symptoms and its causes. Amazingly enough, however, there are many people with asthma who don't realize it — who chalk their symptoms up to allergies and leave it at that. There are also rare but very serious cases of asthma that can cause prolonged, chronic illness or, in a worst-case scenario, death.

So what is asthma? How can you tell the difference between, say, asthma, bronchitis, and allergies? All three of these overlap, and although you're unlikely to confuse a bout of bronchitis with asthma, you may mistake bronchial-induced asthma as prolonged bronchitis symptoms long after

you've recovered from the disease. Confused yet? Don't be. Let's take this one step at a time.

There are many causes of asthma, and in our modern world, it affects up to 25% of urban children. Part of the reason, asthma is so often confused with other illnesses or symptoms is because allergies, bronchitis, and even common colds can trigger a reaction (commonly known as an asthma attack).

What Happens During an Asthma Attack?

During an asthma attack, the airway gets inflamed and constricts. Mucus production increases, and breathing becomes very difficult — like breathing through a straw. Asthma sufferers notice anything from slight discomfort to wheezing to burning lungs. The one common current is that they can't get enough air.

Think of this, another way. Imagine your airway as a bathtub drain. When the drain is working properly, you pour water into the tub; pull the plug, and it all flows away — plain and simple. But what happens if the drain gets clogged? Most of the time, it's not enough to stop water from draining, it just slows it down. And so instead of draining in less than a minute, you might have to wait a long time for that large volume of water to vanish from your tub.

During an asthma attack, your airway gets clogged just like that drain. You're still taking in air, but not as much. It's going to take a lot longer for your body to process the volume of air it would in a normal space of time. That can lead to the

symptoms mentioned above. In addition, some people have a strong panic reflex. Their bodies panic because, quite simply, they aren't getting enough air. Ironically enough, that makes it even harder to breathe (we've all had the experience: you get nervous enough and your breath comes in short, shallow gasps, right? That's a problem when you're already struggling to breathe).

What Asthma Looks Like: One of the main things that sets asthma apart from colds, allergies, and other respiratory infections is that it's chronic: that is, it doesn't go away. Of course, some people have recurring seasonal allergies without having asthma, and some people have asthma primarily triggered by seasonal allergies. An important distinction, though, is that seasonal allergies tend to have good days and bad. Asthma tends to react strongly to the same stimulus every time.

Some people have constant struggles with asthma. These people have trouble breathing when they exert themselves physically. They're the ones who need to carry inhalers at all times. They usually aren't sure what triggers their asthma, and asthma attacks are a constant, unpleasant part of their day.

Others live completely normally in between periodic bouts of asthma. In other words, what asthma looks like varies from person to person, from case to case. As you can see, it's very difficult to pigeonhole a definition of asthma. There's no fine, dividing line that says, "this is asthma" and "this is allergies." The bottom line tends to be that if it gets severe enough that normal measures

don't help, you're looking at asthma — and this is a distinction only individual patients together with their doctors can make.

What Causes Asthma?

There are many answers to this question. Unfortunately, asthma is a highly individual illness. What triggers an asthma attack in Patient A might have no affect whatsoever on Patient B, even though Patient B's asthma is more severe than Patient A's. If this sounds confusing, it's because it is! Doctors still aren't 100% clear on what causes asthma. They do, however, have some ideas, and there are definite patterns in terms of triggers — i.e., what sets asthma off.

Theories about Asthma: As with any unsolved scientific problem, doctors are struggling to uncover why some people become asthmatic and others don't, even when exposed to the same conditions. They have found that:

- asthma tends to be genetic. Some people have a strong genetic disposition towards asthma while others come from a background of strong lungs.
- there are definite environmental factors that influence the onset of asthma, but researchers aren't confident explaining what they are. That's because not everyone exposed to a certain environment gets asthma. Some environments, though, seem much more likely to produce asthmatics than others.
- because an inflamed airway is basically your immune system gone a little overboard, people who are prone to asthma also seem

prone to respiratory infections like bronchitis and pneumonia. After suffering one of these illnesses, some people have recurring asthmatic episodes even though they were perfectly healthy before.

Environmental Factors: Many doctors believe that environmental factors are the primary causes of asthma. Some of these include:

Poor Air Quality: People, especially children, who live in urban areas where they are exposed to pollution and smog are far more likely to develop asthma than those who live in rural areas. Air pollution, especially high ozone levels, seems to be prime contributors to asthma.

Cigarette Smoke: This one is, unfortunately, not just for smokers. True, smokers are more likely to develop asthma than nonsmokers, which makes sense if you think about what tobacco does to your lungs. Unfortunately, though, people — especially children — who live with smokers are even more likely to develop asthma. And infants born to smoking mothers (i.e., mothers who smoke during pregnancy) almost inevitably have some sort of respiratory damage, the least of which is asthma.

Allergens: When you have an allergic reaction, your body is basically doing the right thing at the wrong time. You've probably noticed how similar allergy symptoms are to cold symptoms. Maybe sometimes, you can't even tell the difference. There's a reason for that.

When you get a cold or flu, your body activates your immune system. It:

- detects the malignant bacteria or virus
- increases mucus production to protect your respiratory system
- may increase your body temperature in an effort to kill off the germs
- may make you sneeze or cough in an effort to get rid of the foreign invaders

When you have an allergic reaction, your body is doing the exact same thing. The allergen — the thing you're allergic to — enters your body and your body, for whatever reason, interprets it as a malignant bacteria or virus. It immediately sends your immune system a message to start working and kill off those nasty germs — even though none exist.

Because a key aspect of the immune response is increasing mucus production, coughing, and wheezing — also symptoms of asthma — serious allergic reactions can lead to asthma in some individuals.

Things You'd Never Expect: So far, we're pretty old hat: most people realize that pollution, allergies, and infections contribute to asthma. But did you know that many researchers now believe that medical advances do the same thing? Some of these include:

Antibiotics: People, who take a lot of antibiotics, especially at a young age, show an increased risk of asthma. Scientists theorize this is because

the antibiotics change the nature of your immune system.

Birth: Were you born by a Caesarian section? You're 20% more likely to get asthma than if you'd been born through a vaginal birth. As with antibiotics, scientists believe this has something to do with the way your bacteria, and subsequently your immune system, changes when you're exposed to the outside world before your body would choose naturally.

Stress: There are two types of stress that can increase your risk of asthma. If a mother experiences strong bouts of emotional stress during pregnancy, this seems to increase her child's risk of asthma. But stress in children and adults themselves can also lead to asthma. Symptoms of panic attacks include shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, and chest pain — all symptoms associated with asthma. In other words, high stress levels can give you an illness!

But let's face it: if you suffer from asthma, it doesn't matter that much where it came from. What matters is what triggers it and how you can handle your reaction. So let's talk about it.

What Triggers Asthma

There are as many asthma triggers as there are asthmatics, but we can make a few generalizations. For example, almost everyone who experiences asthma has some form of seasonal allergy. Figuring out what causes your asthma attacks can help you take steps to prevent them!

In order to do that, you're going to have to keep track of your asthma. Notice if it seems worse at certain times of the day, week, month, or year. If you only seem to have asthma in the spring, you're probably dealing with a seasonal allergen trigger. If you wake up every morning feeling wheezy and asthmatic, on the other hand, you might want to consider a hypoallergenic mattress cover. Regardless, understanding your asthma is the first step to treating it.

Common Asthma Triggers:

1. Dust: It's everywhere, even in the most meticulously maintained home or office. And unfortunately, it's one of the most common asthmatic triggers. Remember, you're breathing this stuff in. It can clog your airway all by itself, or your immune system might interpret it as a foreign agent. Either way, it spells trouble.

2. Chemical Fumes and Odors: If you work in an environment where you're regularly exposed to chemical fumes and odors — including tobacco smoke — you might notice your asthma getting worse. This operates on the same principle as the dust: your body (correctly, in this case) interprets the chemical fume as harmful and shoots into overdrive, resulting in an asthma attack.

3. Pollution: Like chemical fumes and odors, pollutants can trigger asthma in many people. If you live in a large urban area, air pollution may be contributing to your attacks.

4. Weather Changes: Weather changes often release pollen and other allergens into the air.

Many people find their allergies most active when seasons change or storms are coming.

5. Seasonal Allergies: Seasonal allergies are difficult because you can hardly eliminate pollen, trees, and grass from your immediate environment. They often require creativity and/or medication to control.

6. Indoor allergies: Although indoor allergies might seem more troublesome than outdoor since they're in your actual house, it's actually a lot easier to control them than it is to control seasonal allergies. We could be talking about pets, dust mites, mildew, mold, or any number of things lurking in places you'd never suspect: under the couch, on top of light fixtures, or even in your mattress.

Obviously, you can't eliminate all of these triggers. However, it's worth your while to figure out what triggers your asthma and take any reasonable steps to eliminate the source. For example, if your beloved pet dog gives you frequent bouts of wheezing, at least try to keep him out of your bedroom. If your mattress seems to be the problem, consider having it cleaned. Only you can control your immediate environment.

Medicine and Doctors

Thousands of people rely on medication to control their asthma. There are three different types of asthma medication:

1. Long Term
2. Quick Relief
3. Allergy Symptoms

Long Term: People who suffer extreme bouts of asthma that seriously affects their ability to function usually take a daily medication to control the illness. These can be inhaled or oral, and are often a form of steroid combined with an anti-inflammatory.

Inhaled Corticosteroids: Some people hear the term “steroids” and immediately panic. Don’t worry: you’re thinking of anabolic steroids, which are often abused by athletes. Corticosteroids are extremely useful in fighting asthma. Because you inhale them directly into your airway, they are quickly effective and don’t involve many side effects. Many people consider inhaled corticosteroids the most effective way of combating asthma.

The one caveat involves children: any type of steroid has the potential to stunt growth. If your child is on a corticosteroid, regularly monitor their growth and development.

Long Acting Beta 2 Agonists: These medications are sometimes prescribed in conjunction with inhaled corticosteroids — never on their own. They are specifically designed to prevent nighttime symptoms by opening your airways.

Be very careful with these medications, as the FDA has issued a warning that they can actually increase the severity of asthma attacks. This

doesn’t necessarily mean they’re worthless: many antidepressants actually increase the risk of depression in some people. It does mean, though, that if you’re on one of these medications and experience an asthma attack, you should quickly contact your doctor.

Leukotriene Modifiers: These are sometimes prescribed in addition to corticosteroids. They are only prescribed on their own for people with mild asthma who want to dodge steroids.

Cromolyn and Nedocromil: These are similar to leukotriene modifiers: you use them to prevent mild asthma attacks. Sometimes they can also help people who find exercise triggers their asthma.

Theophylline: This is an oral pill that can help control asthma, especially nighttime bouts. However, it comes with a long list of side effects, so it’s not right for everyone.

Quick Relief Medication: Quick relief medications are to be taken when you sense the beginnings of an asthma attack. You can also obtain devices (peak flow meters) that warn you when an asthma attack is in the making. Most people, though, become very familiar with their own warning signs.

Short Acting Beta 2 Antagonists: Remember long acting beta 2s? These aren’t at all the same. Long actors are to prevent the onset of asthma symptoms; short actors immediately relieve them, but don’t stop them from coming back.

Ipratropium (atrovent): This is another quick acting symptom-reliever.

Oral and intravenous corticosteroids: These are not the same as long-term corticosteroids and come with a long list of side effects. Make sure you fully understand them before you take them. Your doctor should provide you with details and help you decide what's right for you.

Allergy Relief:

Antihistamines: If your allergies are relatively mild, over the counter antihistamines may relieve your symptoms.

Immunotherapy: In other words, allergy shots. The idea is to gradually desensitize you to the allergen through a series of injections, each containing a higher dose of the allergen. This is a good option for people with extremely severe allergies or those who can't avoid the allergen (like that pet you won't get rid of...).

Anti-anti-bodies: These injections prevent your body from releasing the antibodies in response to the allergen. They are usually used as a last resort because they carry the risk of extremely serious side effects, and you should explore all other options first.

Although medications are necessary to control many people's asthma, there are a lot of asthma sufferers who don't relish the idea of being on corticosteroids for the rest of their lives. Fortunately, there are other options for asthma relief, including homeopathic remedies and ways

to minimize your contact with allergens. We'll explore some of these in the next chapter.

Homeopathic Remedies

These days, many people have returned to more natural remedies: herbs, diet changes, etc. There are certain homeopathic remedies that seem to assist people. These remedies don't work for everyone, and if you suffer from severe asthma, they probably won't be able to take the place of medication. However, they may prevent frequent attacks, limit their severity, or improve your quality of daily life.

1. Honey: Some people find that the combination of honey and oxygen has a relaxing affect on the airway, causing it to open. This is a quick relief medication, not a long term or allergy controlling solution. Proponents recommend placing an open jar of honey under your nose when you begin to sense an asthma attack coming on. If you have an inhaler, though, you should probably keep it nearby — just in case the honey doesn't work.

2. Figs: Figs seem to absorb mucus and phlegm, which can relieve some of an asthma sufferer's symptoms.

3. Lemons: Like figs, lemons have a high acidic content that seems to reduce phlegm and inflammation. Your best bet? LEMONADE! Make it with real lemons and small amounts of sugar, and even if it doesn't make your asthma better, it'll taste good!

4. Bitter Gourd Root: This is a natural remedy you can get in health food stores and homeopathic locations (chiropractors often carry natural remedies). It has proven very effective in treating asthma.

5. Arsenicum: Don't worry; it's not arsenic. This is another natural remedy that has proven effective in people whose asthma seems to worsen around early afternoon and again just after midnight.

6. Blatta Orientalis: This is a natural quick relief medication. You take it at the first symptoms, but it does require follow-up and other treatments in between attacks.

7. Kali Carbonicum: If your asthma seems to get worse when exposed to dust, you might find this natural remedy helpful.

Prevention

All of these treatments, though, are nothing compared to controlling your own asthma through prevention. There are many ways to prevent asthma attacks and maintain your own health. It's impossible to engage in all of them, so your best bet is to figure out what triggers your asthma, then pick a few small lifestyle changes you can make to reduce your attacks.

Self-Awareness: One of the most important aspects of prevention is becoming familiar with your asthma. Definitely involve your doctor, who can help you figure out what changes might make your life easier. You should also:

- Keep an asthma journal. Track your attacks, when they happen, and what seemed to trigger them. Keep track of times you feel wheezy or short of breath too, not just actual attacks.
- Develop an action plan. You need to know what you're going to do if you wind up having an asthma attack. Do you have an inhaler? Where is it? Are you going to get caught without it? It's important that you and those close to you understand how to handle your asthma.
- Act fast. When you begin to notice symptoms coming on, do not under any circumstances try to ignore them. Take steps to stop the attack before it happens. If you think you can get it under control by moving aside and calming yourself down, do that, but be ready to go for your medication or whatever else you need to stop the attack.

Diet: Whether you have asthma or not, a diet that's high in fat and leads to obesity is going to result in shortness of breath and difficulty with physical exertion. If you have asthma, so much the worse. It's extremely important that you take care of yourself — eat properly, get plenty of sleep, and try to avoid excessive stress.

Some people also advocate a lactose-free diet for asthma sufferers. No one has proven the link between dairy products and asthma, but many people, including doctors, have found that eliminating dairy from your diet can make a serious difference as to your asthma. These days there are many rice and soy alternatives to milk (and they taste good, so don't judge before you

try!) so it might be worth giving the lactose-free diet a try.

Eliminate Allergens: Eliminating allergens could be a book on its own. There are so many different allergies out there that it's impossible to make a generalization about how to eliminate them. We can, however, make recommendations about some of the more common allergies.

1. Season allergies: If you're allergic to pollen or, as some people would say, the spring, you can take steps to control that. Try not to go outside on windy days. Keep your windows closed whenever possible. Get someone else to take care of yard work, especially mowing the lawn. And if you know you're going to be outdoors, take an antihistamine ahead of time.

2. Pets: The experts would say, get rid of the allergy-inducing animal, but some people are foolish about their pets. If you must keep Fido, at least bar him from your bedroom. You might also look into a HEPA filter, which can very effectively filter pet hair out of the air.

Many people find allergenic mattress covers very effective as well. If your pet isn't allowed in your bedroom, you put a HEPA filter in there, and you invest in a good mattress cover specifically designed for asthmatics and allergy sufferers, you'll probably find you can keep your pet after all. You might also look into rubs or shampoos and foods that are designed to reduce the amount of allergens your pet produces.

3. Dust: The obvious answer here is to dust regularly. Use a static-driven duster or a furniture spray: otherwise, you're just moving the dust around. Ideally, someone else should handle this chore; if that's impossible, you might want to cover your mouth and nose.

Many of the same things that apply to pets apply to dust. A HEPA filter can be extremely helpful in dealing with dust. A hypoallergenic mattress cover can also provide a lot of relief from dust mites and other asthma induced allergies.

You'd be amazed at how much dust is lurking around your bedroom, especially in your bed. Keep your bedding clean, and your mattress too. Your mattress should be cleaned almost as often as your bedding. You can do it yourself by vacuuming (outside, so you don't raise a cloud of dust) or have it done professionally.

You should also make sure that your mattress is high quality. That may sound foolish, but there are two very important reasons why:

1. A high quality mattress provides a better rest, and lack of sleep and high stress are essential to controlling asthma.
2. An old mattress probably contains all kinds of dust mites and allergens and who-knows-what.

Remember, your bed is the only thing you actually lie down on and breathe in for eight hours every single night. It could be the single most important aspect of controlling your asthma. If you keep

your mattress, bedding, and pillow clean and invest in a good quality mattress cover to control your allergies, you may be surprised at the change in your asthma.

Asthma can be painful, annoying, or even deadly, but it doesn't have to disrupt your life. With attention and care, you can live a perfectly normal life, taking steps to eliminate or at least control your asthma. Don't let asthma rule you a second longer! Take control of your own life and positive changes are bound to ensue.

Chapter 13: Treat Insomnia for Better Physical, Emotional, and Mental Wellbeing



Many people may suffer from insomnia at some point in their lives, as it is a fairly common problem, especially as you age. Long-term insomnia can have drastic effects on your health, if the problem is not properly addressed.

If you suffer from long term insomnia chances are it will eventually begin to influence performance at work, as well as dull your thinking abilities considerably. When you are constantly tired and fatigued, simple tasks that usually take little, to no thought at all will become more difficult. Writing out a check correctly, or remembering to pay your monthly bills, is just a couple of examples of how insomnia can dull your thought process.

It is a fact that humans need to sleep in order to survive. Sleeping is as natural for humans as breathing. When you sleep, your body is regenerating, and when you do not get the proper amount of sleep, your body will eventually become worn down, and unable to fight off illness.

It is during sleep that the body creates the hormones that nurture and heal muscle, as well as other body tissues.

When you go through a long period where you are lacking quality sleep, your body will no longer have the ability to be resistant to disease, causing you to become ill more often, and the illnesses you suffer may become more serious.

Few people realize that lack of quality sleep may also cause weight gain. Over a long period of time, someone who suffers from insomnia may develop insulin resistance, which is a condition to where your body is not using insulin, as it should be. This could result in too much insulin in the body, which turns to fat cells and is stored, usually around the stomach.

Another area of your health that lack of quality sleep may influence is your brain. At one time it was commonly believed that the brain went into a doormat stage during sleep, but this is no longer thought to be true. On the contrary, when you are asleep the brain is also regenerating as it continually works out problems, even those that may exist at a subconscious level. In addition, research has shown that when you do not get enough sleep, you may begin having problems

retaining memories, as well as processing complex emotions.

Those who suffer from insomnia may experience some, or all of the following problems.

- Fatigue
- Drowsiness
- Lack of concentration
- A decrease of alertness and work performance
- Muscles seem to ache for no reason.
- Depression
- Feeling stressed and irritable

Of course many people have experienced short bouts of temporary insomnia brought on by a particularly stressful event. You can suffer from temporary insomnia if you have had a recent illness, emotional crisis, or are under a lot of stress. Pain, and certain medications can also bring on insomnia. It is when this becomes a long term problem that it will begin to influence your day to day living, as well as your health.

People can suffer from insomnia at any age, from children to the elderly, though it is a much more frequent problem with older people.

How can I tell if I have insomnia?

You may be suffering from insomnia if,

- You are having trouble falling asleep
- You find that you frequently wake up many times during the night, and have difficulty returning to sleep.

- You wake up too early in the morning
- You feel groggy and un-refreshed when you wake in the morning, even if you have slept up to 7 or 8 hours.

People vary in the amount of sleep that they need, but on average a person needs at least 7 hours of sleep each night, but even if you are getting that much sleep, you can also be classified as suffering from insomnia if you are not getting enough quality sleep.

What is insomnia?

Insomnia is a broad term to classify a small number of different types of sleep disorders. There are actually a few different types of insomnia, and they include,

- Short-term insomnia, also known as Transient insomnia; this is a type of insomnia that can last anywhere from a single night, to a few weeks.
- Intermittent insomnia is when someone suffers from insomnia that comes and goes. This is usually a short-term insomnia problem, which may only affect you every once in a while.
- Chronic insomnia is the ongoing inability to get enough sleep, or enough quality sleep. If you suffer from insomnia three or more nights a week, for more than a month, it is considered chronic insomnia.

Chronic insomnia can also be divided into two different categories. The two categories include,

- Primary insomnia. This is a case of insomnia that does not appear to be related to any other underlying health issues.
- Secondary insomnia. This type of insomnia can be caused by some health related problem, such as asthma, or arthritis. Anything that causes pain, which does not allow you to sleep well, can cause secondary insomnia. Some medications may also cause insomnia, as well as caffeine, stress, or some type of emotional or mental health issue. In addition, secondary insomnia can be caused by a poor sleep environment, such as too much light, a bad mattress, etc.

What can you do about insomnia?

Because insomnia can be such a serious health risk, if you are suffering from insomnia, you may want to talk with your healthcare provider, especially if you are unsure of what the source of your sleeplessness is. Before seeing your doctor, it may be helpful to keep a sleep diary for a week or two, so that you can keep track of your sleep patterns.

When you visit your doctor, you will likely get a physical to eliminate any possible health problem that may be causing your insomnia; if there is no underlying health issue, your doctor may recommend that you see a specialist to help with your problem.

How is insomnia commonly treated?

A short-term insomnia problem that is caused by a disruption in your sleep pattern, such as with jet lag, or a short illness, will likely correct itself. If you are having sleep problems that do not seem to be getting better, there are several possible treatments that your doctor may suggest.

- The first step in treating chronic insomnia may involve finding, and treating any medical condition that could be contributing to the problem.
- Paying attention to any routine or behavior that could be contributing to chronic insomnia. This may include drinking alcohol, or drinks that contain caffeine too late in the day.
- Using sleeping pills may be another way in which to treat chronic insomnia, but be aware that there is some debate about the safety during long-term use. Talk with your doctor before deciding on this mode of treatment for your insomnia.
- Some experts suggest using a relaxation therapy to help cure chronic insomnia. Relaxation therapy helps to relieve your body and mind of stress, which can help you to fall asleep faster.

What can you do to help with insomnia?

Here are a few things you can do yourself, to help ease the problem of chronic insomnia.

- Eliminate naps during the day. Obviously if you are sleeping during the day, this could contribute to being unable to sleep at night. Try to stay awake during the day, and only sleep at night.
- Establish a sleep routine. For some reason, a number of people will sleep better if they have a sleep routine. To establish a sleep routine you will need to go to bed about the same time each night, and get up approximately the same time every morning.
- Reduce or eliminate your use of caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol; especially later in the day, or at night.
- Ensure that you are getting regular exercise. Regular exercise not only will help to keep you fit, and in good health, it also seems to help treat insomnia. If you exercise, make sure that it is during the day, or at least 5 hours before your normal bedtime. By doing this, you can get enough exercise to help make you tired, but enough time will have elapsed that there is no longer excessive adrenaline in your system to contribute to insomnia.
- Do not eat right before you go to bed. After you eat, this can cause indigestion, which could prevent you from getting quality sleep. For this reason, do not eat for about 2 to 3 hours before you go to bed.
- Sleep in a dark, and quiet environment. This is important for getting enough quality sleep. If you have a problem with light invading your sleeping space, you could try using a mask to cover your eyes while you sleep. If there is too much noise to sleep, use earplugs, or possibly a fan to help cover up the outside noise.

- Relax before trying to go to bed. One of the biggest reasons that people tend to toss and turn when they go to bed is that they are still wound up from their day. If you have a relaxation routine to help release tension, you will likely fall asleep much easier. Try taking a hot bath, listening to music, or reading a book. These relaxation routines can do wonders for helping ease the tension that has been building all day, and you'll be surprised at how quickly you will get sleepy.
- Ensuring that you have a comfortable bed that will be helpful in sleeping. Obviously, if you are sleeping on a lumpy old mattress, this could lead to chronic insomnia. Sleeping on a bad mattress can lead to back pain, poor circulation; in addition, some older mattresses can actually aggravate asthma and allergies. If you think your mattress could be contributing to your insomnia, you may want to consider shopping around for a new mattress and box springs set. A comfortable mattress can make all the difference when it comes to getting a good night's sleep.
- If you have been in bed more than 20 minutes without falling asleep, it may be a good idea to get up and do something until you get tired. Do something that is relaxing, and not too active, such as reading. Return to bed when you become drowsy.
- If you find that as soon as your head hits the pillow your mind is racing with all the things you need to do, or other worries, try to push all thoughts from your head, and concentrate on a relaxing place, such as a quiet beach, a mountain retreat.

If after trying these remedies, you still cannot find relief from chronic insomnia, it may be time to discuss the problem with your doctor. There could very well be some underlying mental, or physical health problem that you are not aware of. If this is the case, your doctor can either diagnose the problem, or send you to a specialist who can better treat your condition.

A good night's sleep is very important for your physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing; it is never a good idea to let chronic insomnia go untreated.

Chapter 14: Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and the Vital Importance of Sleep



Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a frightening disease for many reasons. Primarily, humans are terrified of MS because we do not fully understand it. It is also problematic because it affects many people differently. It is even unpredictable in how it affects individuals on a daily basis. Additionally, it continues to grow worse and becomes more difficult to manage as time passes.

Multiple Sclerosis affects all types of people, and shows little mercy when it attacks. It can make life very difficult, sometimes impossible. The fatigue is often overwhelming. As well there are the weakness, balance and mobility issues. The simple tasks of any given day become impossible and sometimes even dangerous. It tries the loyalty and commitment of friends

and family. It can truly put the promise of “for better or worse” and “in sickness and health” to the test.

When you're faced with a challenge like this, you have two choices, give up, or fight hard at every turn for any and everything that will make your life better. As humans, this is among the things we do best—fighting hard and long for what we believe is rightfully ours.

When Taking Life's Little Things For Granted Is No Longer An Option

Humans often take the most important things in life for granted until they are gone. Sleep is a prime example of this. Over the course of a lifetime, the average person will spend 233,592 hours sleeping. Most people don't even think about it until getting even a few hours of sleep becomes very difficult.

That's where the problem begins for most people. They do not think about lack of sleep until it becomes an issue, people do not understand how quality of your sleep affects dramatically your quality of your life. The relationship between sleep quality and quality of life is particularly true in people who have disease challenges like Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Recently, Austrian researchers at the University of Vienna conducted a study on the effect of sleep on MS patients. They found that inadequate sleep quality was nearly twice as frequent in MS patients compared to people who did not have MS.

Sleep Hygiene and Sleep Debt: What is it?

Sleep Hygiene (SH) is the various practices one uses to achieve quality sleep. SH is essential in order for the brain to conduct its routine repairs from processing the day's events, in order to prepare for following day's events.

Sleep Debt (SD) occurs when you start getting less sleep than you need or poor quality sleep. It's like a financial debt that accrues over time from paying only a portion of a monthly bill.

Key Sleep Hygiene and Sleep Debt Concerns

SH and SD affects learning and memory. During sleep the brain organizes and files away all of the memories of the day. There is a huge amount of research showing that people who have better sleep hygiene perform better on memory and learning tasks. This is because the brain has had sufficient time and resources to better manage its constant rewiring.

Chronic poor sleep affects how your body processes and stores carbohydrates. It alters chemicals in the body that are known to affect appetite as well.

Obviously, Sleep Hygiene and Sleep Debt affect energy levels. When you don't get proper sleep you have less energy, you become irritable and impatient. While we all know this, the important thing to consider here is that as adults there are things that we must do in our days and things that we like to do. Since we are adults

the things that we must do come first—that’s the difference between being an adult and a child (again, typically and hopefully). Having less energy translates into having less fun. While you’re putting the things you like to do on hold to honor your responsibilities and commitments, you’re using up your energy supply.

Day in and day out, of not having the energy to do the things you like and want can lead to depression. There have been hundreds of studies confirming this. There’s another key element to understand about poor sleep. Understanding it involves understanding what drives brain behavior, and how important sleep is to the brain. The brain views itself as the most important organ. So it behaves as if its needs are the most important. Thus, because sleep is vital to the brain, when your sleep is compromised, the brain processes it as a serious threat.

How the brain processes serious threats is logical but not always in our best interest. The newer part of the brain, where thinking occurs, shuts down when the brain perceives threat. When this happens the older part of the brain takes over. This part of the human brain is identical to brain in animals. It is designed to “survive now and ask questions later.” There’s a very valid reason for this. Imagine you’re a zebra. You hear a rustle in the bushes. It might be a lion; it could also be tumble weed. If you stop to think about it, and it is tumbleweed you’re okay. However, if you stop to think about it and it’s a lion you’re done. So in the interest of survival you “survive now, and ask questions later.”

While this works fine for zebras, it can be problematic for modern day humans. The reason is even though the old part of our brain hasn’t changed since we were cave people, human lifestyles and technology has changed a great deal. This is a problem for the old brain, because it processes all threat the same: “survive now ask questions later”.

“Survive now, ask questions later,” in terms of sleep debt, when translated in the old mammal brain, becomes, “go to sleep, right here, right now.” That’s fine if you’re in a cave, or wandering the Serengeti. However, if you’re driving on the freeway, or working as an Air Traffic Controller—the consequences are potentially devastating.

Sleep Hygiene and Sleep Debt are also bad for your heart. Since the brain processes a sleep debt as stress, it naturally responds with the standard human stress response. That is, it prepares for fight-or-flight. To do this it raises the blood pressure to increase blood flow and oxygen to the large limbs to prepare them to run or to do battle.

That’s good in the short term. However, when your blood pressure is continuously increased, you develop “high blood-pressure”, which is dangerous.

Lack of sleep and poor sleep can also cause your heart to beat irregularly, which is one of the leading causes of strokes.

Why A Good Bed Is Crucial To Good Sleep Hygiene

You move the least when you sleep. At this time, gravity is the major force affecting your body, and particularly your spine. Good back support evenly distributes the stress on your spine while you sleep.

Most orthopedists agree that mattresses should adapt to the body's curves, while remaining flat. Having a pleasant spring action, good ventilation, and not being too warm or too cold is also important. Adapting to your body's natural curves, while remaining flat and having good spring action is the difference between a good mattress and a great mattress. This is because these factors seriously affect your spine during sleep. The spine is like the main highway in your body for the transmission of nerve impulses between the brain and the body. So the integrity of the spine will affect the integrity of the information flowing between your brain and body. As you know all too well, there is a big difference between a fast moving efficient highway and one that is not.

When you are lying on your side on a hard mattress, only your hip and your shoulder are supported and your spine is curving outward from the mattress. A soft mattress will cause your hip and shoulder to sink creating a sideways bending of your spine away from the mattress. When you are lying face up, your pelvis and upper back are in contact with the mattress, while the small of your back receives minimal support. This is not good spine support.

In a survey of orthopedic surgeons, 95% believed that mattresses played a part in the management of low-back pain, with 76% recommending a firm mattress. Additionally, most physicians who regularly treat lower back pain patients advise against the use of soft mattresses.

People who have chronic low-back pain are more sensitive to the firmness of mattresses than healthy people. People with MS are twice as likely to have lower back pain as people who do not have MS.

The bottom line is that more uniform body support reduces back pain and produces a more uniform sleep. More uniform sleep makes you healthier on multiple levels.

All of the research, the theory, and the physician opinions aside, let's just draw on some common sense. If you're about to bake something, it helps to have a good oven and the right pan. Having a good oven and the right pan won't make you a pastry chef; however, not having a good oven and the right pan can easily result in a flop. You sleep in a bed, so the first step of getting good sleep is getting a good bed. Therefore, having a bed that easy to get in and out of, that promotes uniform spine support is one of the fundamental currencies of good sleep for people enduring MS.

Multiple Sclerosis: The Big Picture

As we said in the beginning, enduring Multiple Sclerosis is an all out war, all day, every day. Humans are animals, and there are certain basic

truths about animals. They need to eat, breath, drink water, and sleep. Everything else is want not need. When you are in a war, you have to pay particular attention to your basic needs. The better you attend to your basic needs, the better positioned you are to do battle. A hungry soldier, a thirsty soldier, or a soldier gasping for breath, is not the best soldier that he or she could be. Arguably a soldier who is weary because he or she has not slept well is perhaps the least effective soldier of all. When the battle is constant, as it is in MS, the preparation needs to be equally as consistent. Eat good food, drink pure water, breath deeply and most of all sleep well through the night. You'll find our best sleep solutions at the links these links, memory foam mattresses, latex mattresses and adjustable beds.

Chapter 15: Fibromyalgia and Sleep Loss



Pain must have started when Adam was put out of the Garden. Trouble sleeping must have come at the same time, for trouble sleeping and pain are bed-mates, and he can't have had an easy conscience after biting into that forbidden fruit.

Ask someone who doesn't know, "What's this Fibromyalgia Syndrome all about?" and they'll tell you, "Pain!"

Ask someone who suffers from the Fibromyalgia Syndrome and they'll tell you the same, "Pain!!" But then they'll add, "If only I could sleep, I might feel better."

What's in a Name?

Pain may be as old as Adam, and the word we use comes from the goddess of restitution and justice, Nemesis, whose attendant, Poena, was sent to earth to punish mankind. But the word Fibromyalgia is only thirty years old, and although those who coined it undoubtedly meant well, their choice of words has caused endless confusion, for the only part of the word that should be there is in its tail – algia – meaning pain. The fibro, meaning fibrous tissue, and the myo meaning muscle, have no place at all, and have taken attention away from what does matter – the pain, and the difficulty in getting restorative sleep that might reduce the pain.

The philosophical, political, and religious meanings of pain defined the suffering of individuals for much of human history. Pain is the central metaphor of Judeo-Christian thought, as illustrated in the test of faith in the story of Job and the sacrificial redemption of the crucifixion. For millennia, pain was equated with just retribution and suffering was a punishment for known or unknown sins. “We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us.” Therapy was limited to penance, hacksaw, and opium; if we’re honest with ourselves, we haven’t gotten much further.

Neurasthenia

George Beard, an 1866 Columbia University medical graduate, became an electrotherapist and seems to have been the originator of this word, neurasthenia. Beard built the concept on many

similar current terms in American and European medical practice, all of which implied some failure or weakness of the central nervous system, and all of those weaknesses open to improvement with electrical treatment. The symptoms covered were whatever could be imagined, both mental and physical, but primarily of a sensory nature, and so they were labeled “hyperesthesia,” or feeling everything too much. Neurasthenia became the catch-all disease and a specialty in itself, although the cynics designated it as a diagnostic wastebasket and a “mob of incoherent symptoms borrowed from the most diverse disorders.” These symptoms were characterized by a mix of exhaustion and insomnia; “the longer they stay in bed, the tired they feel,” so “fatigue neurosis” was suggested as an alternative name to neurasthenia. All body symptoms were regarded as a “real disease” instead of manifested in a patient’s head; however, the diagnosis became so convenient, so all embracing, that it was eventually valueless and the field moved out of the hands of the neurologists, the “nerve doctors,” and into the field of psychoanalysis. In reading the reports of the distressing symptoms that became classified as neurasthenia, it is easy to think of the legitimate diagnoses we would give now, but not to the persons who, after a course of electric shocks, were restored from prostration to a full and active life. Although the effect of the mind on the body was clearly known to the earliest practitioners of the healing and spiritual arts, the coining of the word psychosomatic dates to 1818, at the time when Mesmer was holding sway with animal magnetism.

Fibrositis - Early Reports

In fibromyalgia, we are now trying to come to grips with invisible pain, essentially invisible by definition. If a cause can be seen, heard, or felt, then the diagnosis must be rethought, for it can't be fibromyalgia. Gowers in 1904 coined the term fibrositis while writing about back pain. and Graham in Toronto in 1940 made use of the term fibrositis when he wrote about "tension rheumatism." The issue became clouded in wartime by ill soldiers, and perhaps by soldiers who wished to be thought of as ill, when Hutchison in 1942 reported 69% of military rheumatology referrals were for fibrositis and Ellman, also in 1942 used fibrositis as a definition for all forms of soft tissue pains, including what was known as "psychogenic rheumatism," and reported at the time that 24% of military referrals for fibrositis had concomitant issues in their psychological profiles

But Why Fibromyalgia?

In 1977 in Toronto, Hugh Smythe (son of the Maple Leaf Hockey Conn Smythe) and Harvey Moldofsky, showed in brain wave tracings (electroencephalograph) there were changes in their fibrositis patients akin to those found in experimentally sleep deprived persons. They devised the term, non-restorative sleep syndrome, which they associated with "tender points." With a list of symptoms to include poor sleep and fatigue, and with the help of colleagues, they went on to devise a set of criteria for clinical diagnosis, formalized in the American College of Rheumatology's 1990 statement, to be termed Fibromyalgia. In 1992 The World Health

Organization accepted Fibromyalgia as a medical condition, just as much as rheumatoid arthritis, or any other established and internationally accepted diagnosis.

What Are The Diagnostic Criteria?

The criteria set up by the 1990 Committee are considered by many to be inadequate or not to meet the more up-to-date understanding of the condition. However, they are used as legal judgement issues, comprising a specified length of time for the pain to have persisted unremittingly, the requirement it should be present in all limbs and the torso, and that a specified number of points in the body should be reported as tender to pressure, even though it is recognized there is no specific abnormal feature at those points. Some specialists are reported to have abandoned the "tender point" requirement, and to make the diagnosis on the history of chronic pain and non-restorative sleep.

Who Has Fibromyalgia?

The diagnosis of fibromyalgia depends on a doctor to make it. It's not like a broken leg or a migraine which you don't need a doctor to tell you what you've got. In fact it's reported by many persons they've seen as many as twenty doctors before one makes this diagnosis. And then once the diagnosis is made, they have in effect fibromyalgia for life since although therapy may alleviate the symptoms of fibromyalgia, there is to date no cure.

Understanding the difficulty of making a diagnosis, it is therefore uncertain how many persons would be diagnosed with fibromyalgia if everyone who had the condition was seen by a doctor who was “tuned in” to the condition. It is, however, generally thought that in the USA and Canada two percent of the population have been diagnosed with the condition and estimated at the extreme as ten percent might in fact suffer it. That’s a lot of people! And then when you consider the sufferers are 90% women, and most are likely to have a mother, a husband and one or more children, then that’s an awful lot of people who are affected by fibromyalgia!

What Treatment Is There For Fibromyalgia?

Setting up a treatment program: It must first be understood that treatment is directed at restoration of function – directed at keeping the fibromyalgia patient functioning in her family, her community, and if possible, her employment. Experience has shown it is most likely to meet success in these goals if the patient is part of an organized programme, directed by experts in fibromyalgia and conducted by a team of therapists.

Yes, suppression of symptoms is intended. Measures to relieve pain will be practised, taught, and continued. Measures to relieve difficulties with sleep will be an important part of the programme. But concentration is directed at maintaining function in the broadest sense of that word.

The whole person: The word “holistic” has been very popular in recent decades and confuses many since it should be written “wholeistic,” but it would lose its pseudo-magic if it became understood. It means no more than treating the whole person, body and mind, and since Socrates’ axiom was, “The part can never be well unless the whole is well,” it’s an oversell to claim “holistic” is a new idea. But, new or old, the patient in the fibromyalgia program will have all issues addressed – pain, sleeplessness, difficulties with work and family – they must all be addressed.

Psychosocial Issues: Many persons in this world have skeletons in their cupboard, perhaps those suffering with fibromyalgia have worse skeletons or more skeletons or are more affected by the ones they have than are the remaining 90% of the population. Whatever the reason, it may help the patient to be interviewed by and to open up freely to an understanding counselor, psychologist, or if appropriate psychiatrist. Even without skeletons preceding the onset of the condition, social issues are almost certain to follow its onset and family counseling might well be beneficial.

Stress, Tobacco, Diet: The counselor will assist in minimizing the effects of stress which are unquestionably liable to enhance pain and to interfere with sleep; these may be obvious in origin such as actual or threatened loss of employment and marital difficulties; they might be less obvious with problems with children and associates, threat of foreclosure and countless other problems that beset the chronically ill.

Tobacco must be given up. There is no specific ill effect, but there is a general attitudinal issue in turning the patient towards a healthy life, and the effects of tobacco on the lungs and liability to cancer do not need to be dwelt on here.

There is no specific diet to be followed, but the patient's dietary habits should be discussed with a knowledgeable person. The chances are in a patient suffering from chronic pain and chronic sleeplessness that they are not eating properly. In a normal diet supplements of vitamins and minerals are not generally required, but if the diet is not normal these might need to be considered. It may be that weight has been gained during a period of inactivity.

Therapists, active and passive treatment:

An exercise program should be part of the overall treatment plan. This will be a "Jane Fonda" stretch and movement program, definitely not a "Hulk Hogan" to build large muscles. Sometimes, if available, a warm pool makes movements easier to perform and more comfortable. It should be enjoyable and usually when performed in a group in an atmosphere of mutual encouragement, it is more pleasant and more effective. If it is possible for the patient to sleep better after a period of exercise, then that will be an additional benefit.

There is a role for passive treatment by massage which eases discomfort. Whether the use of machines, TENS, acupuncture, lamps etc., should be employed will be a decision made by the therapists, but in general it is believed what the patient does for herself with encouragement

(active therapy) is far more effective than what is done to her (passive therapy).

Medication for pain and depression: Some medication for pain is usually required, but most patients will wish to keep this to a minimum. The question of using morphine or its derivatives is frequently raised, with the spurious argument, if it's used for cancer, why not fibromyalgia? The answer, which some find difficult to accept, is that in fibromyalgia morphine simply doesn't work. The nervous system is equipped with what are termed "morphine receptors" on which the drug works but fibromyalgia patients are found to be deficient in them and the otherwise extremely valuable drug is therefore ineffective.

There are three specific medications on the market approved by the strict regulations of the US Food and Drug Authority (FDA), and the equivalent Canadian body. They were originally marketed for the relief of what is called neuropathic pain, a type of very severe pain believed to originate in a confused functioning of the central nervous system, and found in diabetics, amputees and paraplegics. It is considered that patients with fibromyalgia suffer from the same central pain which explains the absence of clinical findings.

Anti-depressants are often ordered for persons in chronic pain, for two reasons. Firstly, chronic pain causes depression and they have value in relieving that. Second, there is a close pharmacologic action in the relief of the two symptoms and mild anti-depressants are often all that is needed.

Sleep hygiene: Sleep is in itself a period of active rehabilitation, not an empty gap between periods of activity. Most persons with fibromyalgia are distressed by inefficient or insufficient sleep, such that non-restorative sleep has become a hallmark of the condition.

The physician (preferably a sleep specialist) should take some considerable trouble with such patients to enquire into their sleeping habits. These should include the nature of the mattress (latex, memory foam and fully adjustable beds are good choices), the persons with whom their accommodation is shared, the hours of going to bed and getting up, ventilation, noise environment, and whether coffee, alcohol etc., are taken before going to bed. The patient should keep a sleep diary which would include not merely the sleep at night, but also any dozing during the day.

From these enquiries can be determined what need there is for any medication, which will always be kept to a minimum, will be given for short periods only, and will not become part of an habitual routine. The patient will learn to adjust her life so that she sleeps in comfort, naturally, and is not drugged.

Chapter 16: Bed Sores Are Not Imminent for the Bedridden



Are you bedridden and showing signs of skin breakdown? Does your body ache during the night because your mattress doesn't have much give to it? Do you constantly turn over at night in bed, trying to avoid the pain of bedsores?

If you've experienced bedsores yourself, you know that these aren't the only issues that bedridden patients have to deal with on a daily basis. Faced with open wounds that itch and hurt, many bedsore victims also often cringe at the thought of having dressings changed, or wonder when someone can become available to bathe them and apply some type of topical ointment for just a little bit of much-needed relief.

The Goal: Reverse Bed Sores Now and Prevent Them From Returning

By reading this article, you have the opportunity to stop feeling the frustration, disappointment, physical pain, and embarrassment of bedsores.

You can once again have smooth skin and feel the pleasure of warm sheets and a firm mattress on your skin. You'll discover the latest developments in bed sore treatments right here and now. By combining several of them together into a strategy of attack on this condition, you can find its cure and never have to suffer from bedsores again!

With this goal in mind, there are four primary categories to consider for the elimination of bedsores and the rebuilding of the skin so that it won't break down, no matter what environment you are exposed to.

The categories are listed below and in order of what takes the least amount of time to accomplish.

1. Bedding Choices: Aids From The Best of the Best Scientists: Bedridden patients haven't been left out of healing. On the contrary, even NASA scientists have made progress that affects you in your current challenges. Their research has contributed greatly to the development of mattresses, such as memory foam, which totally eliminates the pressure of a mattress against the skin.

And if you have any soreness on any part of your body from sleeping on your current mattress, you'll

read about what these scientists have discovered about pressure on the skin causing bedsores.

The NASA scientists have already stayed up all night searching for solutions for this so you don't have to! Their solutions were good enough for the astronauts and they're good enough for you, too!

2. Nutrition: What You Eat Becomes Part of You!: The 21st century is the age of in-depth research from the science of nutrition. Because scientists already understand what each vitamin and mineral does in the body, and have a good comprehension of biochemistry, metabolism, healing, regenerative medicine, and skin physiology, now is the age of answers. It's easier now than ever to simply read the research and create healing plans for any condition. The answers are there – and the research is fascinating.

3. Topical Ointments and Dressings: New Levels of Penetrability Bring Long-Lasting Relief: All the research on skin physiology has uncovered one major fact: we know how to make products that will be absorbed by the skin. No longer is the skin's barrier to impermeable substances a problem if you want to heal bedsores.

4. Optional Treatments to Consider: The 21st century is the age of technological advancements, too. It's possible that you may want to ask your doctor for referrals for some of these treatments.

Nutrition: What You Eat Does Become Part of You!

Bedsore, called pressure ulcers or decubiti, are a problem without boundaries. And worldwide, researchers are concluding that nutrition is a big key to overcoming bedsores.

Spanish and Brazilian Researchers Predict Who Gets Bedsores: In Spain, doctors at the Servicio de Medicina Interna Univeristy Hospital in Granada found that poor nutritional status was related to the development of bedsores, and was also related to higher mortality rates.

In Brazil, university researchers studied their hospital records to determine who gets bedsores the most often.

Here's what they found:

- Those who were hospitalized 15 days or more
- Those who couldn't feel sensations on their skin
- Those with very dry skin
- Patients completely immobilized
- Even those with adequate nutrition
- Those with issues involving friction and shear forces in bed

Pretty interesting, wouldn't you agree?

Bedsore Are Graded According to Severity: Bedsore are graded in a level system that can assist health practitioners in their assessments of healing. Any level of bed sore is

a cry of the body for help, but Grade III and IV pressure sores are the worst.

Here's a table on the differences between the types of bedsores.

Table 1. Characteristics of Different Grades of Bedsores

- **Grade I Bed sore** Redness in the skin that is not relieved after pressure is removed. May be painful.
- **Grade II Bed sore** The sore looks like a blister or an abrasion.
- **Grade III Bed sore** The sore has progressed to include the subcutaneous layer of skin.
- **Grade IV Bed sore** The sore has become a deep wound, extending down to the level of tendons, muscles and bones.

It Takes Time to Show Healing So Don't Give Up: Researchers in the Netherlands found that a high protein, arginine and micronutrient-enriched drink in addition to standard treatment for bedsores in 43 patients accelerated the healing dramatically within 8 weeks. Arginine is one of the amino acids necessary for rebuilding new tissues.

The patients in this study were healthy except for the open wounds. Researchers also discovered that drinking the supplement over the 8-week treatment time also benefited the caregivers because fewer dressings were required per week. Great news for family members and home health care providers, too!

Japanese researchers found that when a patient had bedsores, it wasn't smart to hold back on their calorie levels. They concluded that nutrition intervention could directly enhance the healing process and it was especially important to eat at calorie levels 1.5 times that of basal metabolic rate. If the amount of calories your body needs to maintain normal functions is 1200 calories, then providing 1200 plus 600 calories or 1800 calories would be the minimum needed to keep bedsores away.

Protein Matters! Don't Buy Into the Meat is Bad Attitude: Other Japanese researchers found that patients with bedsores had low levels of arginine and when they drank water supplemented with arginine, there was remarkable and significant improvement in the shrinking of the sores.

Canadian researchers took a more wholesome approach to the topic of nutrition and bedsores and examined patients' levels of nutrient consumption for three days for 31 home care patients with bedsores.

Their results? Forty-one percent weren't eating enough calories, 32% weren't getting enough protein, and 55% weren't getting enough zinc in their diets. Without any of these three nutrients, wounds of any kind won't heal.

But that wasn't all they found. Their diets didn't contain the estimated average requirement for fiber, vitamin D, vitamin E, vitamin K, folate, calcium, magnesium and potassium. Those with

bedsores that worsened had low consumption of foods high in vitamin A, K, magnesium and protein.

Korean scientists at the Sung Kyun Kwan University in Seoul re-discovered what smart dietitians have known for a long time about bedsores: they go away when the protein level is increased in the diets of the patients. The scientists concluded that providing supplements to keep serum albumin level greater than 2.8 g/dL is the solution.

How to Calculate Protein Needs for the Day: This means that when you have a bedsore, increasing the protein in the diet up to about a gram per pound body weight may be what's needed to heal. Thus, a 150-lb. woman may need close to 150 grams of protein per day.

Since 7 grams protein is in 1 oz. protein from chicken, turkey, beef, pork, fish, buffalo, or lamb, the way to calculate the amount is to take the total amount needed and divide it by 7. A woman needing 150 grams protein a day will need the equivalent of about 21 ounces of protein per day.

This means small feedings of protein-rich foods are in order! Three small meals with 4 ounce protein from the meat category provides 12 of the 21 ounces. Two 8-oz. cups of milk or yogurt will add another 20 to 28 grams protein, or about 4 more ounces. With the meat and the milk products, you're at 16 ounces for the day so far. Nut snacks and a few grains and legumes during the day will make up the rest of the needed protein.

Other Nutrients Matter, Too!: In Israel, hospital doctors discovered that omega 3 supplements, along with vitamin A, C, and E, as well as gamma-linolenic acid supplements, lowered the occurrence of new bedsores in critically ill patients who had lung disease.

And at the Prince Charles Hospital in Brisbane, doctors didn't just do their research project and let the matter go. They initiated strategies based on what they found in their research and reduced the rate of bedsores from 13.78 to 5.15% in 2010, a reduction of 62%. In over half of those who still had bedsores, the decubiti were only rated Stage 1.

The Prince Charles Hospital approach included providing better nutrition to the patients, better continence care for bowel and bladder control of all patients, and better skin hygiene. This was their winning strategy.

What is it about malnutrition that creates the bedsores? Nutritional deficiencies interfere with the normal stages of wound healing. Any deficiency increases the chance for infection and delays healing of any wounds, which then become chronic, non-healing wounds. This type of wound is correlated with death and dying.

Topical Ointments and Dressings: New Levels of Penetrability Bring Long-Lasting Relief

Science has come a long way in terms of creating different ways to get medicine into the body. In

the last 20 years, a major breakthrough occurred: it was discovered that you could get medicines into the body via the skin. This finding opened up a whole new field of findings about what could get into the body through the skin and what couldn't.

Now, we know that although most things will eventually penetrate the skin, optimum delivery of any substance into the body through the skin may require unique formulation of ingredients.

Topraicin is a patented, natural, safe, odor-free homeopathic cream that improves blood flow to the injured tissue and drains toxins and fluids that build up as well. Listed in the 2010 Physician's Desk Reference, Topraicin is an FDA-regulated over-the-counter medicine created for pain control.

Topraicin is blended without heavy fats or lanolin that prevents active ingredients from penetration into the skin. According to Lou Paradise, developer of the cream, traditionally used fats and lanolin can actually interfere with the skin's ability to detoxify itself and heal.

The use of this ointment could have potential beneficial effects on the pain associated with bedsores.

Herbal and vitamin ointments may also help getting important nutrients into the skin to facilitate better healing, quicker healing and greater reduction of risk of mortality because the skin is healed. Various ointments for skin healing

include substances such as vitamin A, vitamin E, vitamin C, comfrey, and calendula.

Silver Mesh or Silver Cream? Which is Better?:

Thailand researchers used silver mesh dressings, changed once every three days, in a study with 20 patients with Grade III or IV pressure ulcers. The silver mesh dressings saved them a considerable amount of money, close to \$1500 over the cost of silver sulfadiazine cream, and were able to control infections and promote wound healing just as well as the cream.

Optional Treatments to Consider

Six other non-traditional types of treatments researched for their wound healing abilities include electrical stimulation therapy, water-filtered infrared A radiation, vacuum-assisted treatment, pulsed ultrasound, vitronectin growth factor complex, and hyperbaric oxygen treatments.

Canadian researchers in Toronto used electrical stimulation along with traditional treatment for patients who had spinal cord injuries and Grade III and IV pressure ulcers. The added treatment was associated with a cost savings of \$224 over a year's time period and helped stimulate healing.

Germans Use an Innovative and Creative Solution to Decubiti: German scientists found that water-filtered infrared A radiation created the following benefits for those with chronic venous stasis ulcers of the lower legs:

- thermal and non-thermal effects
- tissue temperature increases
- increased oxygen partial pressure and perfusion

Treatments were 30 minutes long five times a week along with standard care treatments such as wound cleansing, compression therapy and nonadhesive wound dressings. The water-filtered infrared A radiation treatment continued for 9 weeks and resulted in faster reduction of the wound area in those using this experimental treatment.

Even though stasis ulcers are not exactly bedsores, both are non-healing wounds that utilize similar wound healing processes in the body. The study appeared in the British Association of Dermatology.

Vacuum Treatment Works in Israel:

Another treatment used for diabetic foot ulcers but not yet bedsores is that of vacuum-assisted therapy. This is a localized controlled negative pressure environment; the V.A.C. therapy system was used. This type of treatment is used for a variety of wound types.

Internal medicine doctors from the Ziv Medical Center in Israel found that vacuum treatment resulted in complete ulcer closure for a great proportion of the 17 patients and decreased the rate of amputation. Granulation tissue was formed and the total healing time was reduced significantly.

Stimulating Wound Repair Appears to Be

the Key: The next three treatments use various methods to achieve only one goal: stimulate the wound repair on a physiological level.

Pulsed ultrasound at 0.1 W/cm² was found by Japanese researchers to increase the number of fibroblasts and protein in the skin within the first 24 hours.

Australian scientists used a clinical Good Manufacturing Practice-grade vitronectin growth factor complex as a topical healing agent on venous leg ulcers and found that it was safe and caused new skin growth in 29 of 30 patients in a pilot study.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment: No Damage to the Body, Study Says:

One type of treatment that is gaining popularity for diabetics with non-healing wounds, although not bedsores, is hyperbaric oxygen treatments. Doctors in Russia and Germany are more educated on this topic since they have been using this type of treatment for decades, with much success.

Some doctors are concerned with possible DNA damage to the body from this treatment because oxygen is a fairly reactive compound that could potentially induce oxidative stress in the body.

In one study completed at the Department of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology at the Comenius University Bratislava in Slovakia, scientists searched for DNA damage from the oxygen treatment. The hyperbaric chamber

was filled with 100% oxygen and the pressure increased to 2.5 or 3.0 atmospheres (ATA).

Because there were no significant changes in the DNA damage values during or after the treatment, doctors concluded that there was no significant risk associated with the treatment.

What Other Studies and Doctors Say about Hyperbaric Oxygen:

Hyperbaric oxygen treatments are definitely a controversial topic in medicine today. Research studies show that hyperbaric oxygen treatment significantly reduced the risk of major amputation and may improve the chance of healing at one year.

In pooled data from three trials on stubborn diabetic foot ulcers with 118 patients, there was a reduction in the risk of amputation when doctors used the treatment. The treatment increases the microvasculature as well as speeds up the healing. If this is something that would benefit patients with decubiti, then perhaps hyperbaric oxygen treatment should be considered.

Some doctors believe that using hyperbaric oxygen treatment for non-healing bedsores is not justified while others. The experts in the field and those who treat patients with hyperbaric oxygen believe it has its place in modern medicine and needs to be integrated into medical practice.

Bedsores don't have to lead to death and more disability. The answers have already been found.

Bedding Choices: Aids From The Best of the Best Scientists

There are many types of bedding choices you can make that will result in a decreased chance of developing bedsores. By changing the surface you are sleeping on and lying on during the day, you can start receiving benefit as soon as the first night of sleep after the mattress or bed arrives.

Memory Foam Mattresses On the Market Since 1980s: The harder the mattress, the less give it has upon the body that lies upon it. The harder a mattress is, the greater the chance for painful pressure sores to develop.

NASA scientists invented memory foam back in the 1970s. They wanted the astronauts to avoid developing pressure spots or bedsores while up in the spacecrafts. In the next decade, the memory foam was created into memory foam mattresses, which have been extremely useful for those with all types of ailments.

Memory foam adapts to your body, and slowly bounces back to its original shape when you aren't in bed. This characteristic is called viscoelasticity. It means you can sink down into the memory foam mattress when you lie on the bed and feel totally supported, and view the shape of your body in the mattress when you arise. This type of mattress reduces the pressure on the body from the mattress all the way down to zero.

And by reducing the pressure, you can more easily recover from bedsores.

Latex Foam Mattresses Offer More Support: Latex foam mattresses are another good choice of mattress for those with bedsores because these mattresses also reduce the pressure on the body. The difference is that latex foam mattresses bounce back much quicker than the memory foam mattresses; they are more elastic in nature. Latex foam mattresses are created from rubber.

Many people are concerned about latex allergies and wonder if this is a problem with the mattresses. Latex foam mattresses are hypoallergenic, even to those who have latex allergies. Allergy reactions don't occur unless you actually open the mattress and touch the latex. The proteins that cause the allergic reaction are washed away during the processing of the latex.

Who Wants a Regular Bed When You Can Have a Hospital Bed at Home?: For any patient who is bedridden, the idea of laying in a bed all day and all night in the same position is agonizing. Pillows really don't work that well to prop up someone in bed. The use of a hospital bed in the home of a bedridden patient is now more and widely accepted.

An adjustable electric bed eliminates a great part of the struggle to get up and out of the bed just because it is adjustable; the patient can place his feet directly on the floor when sitting on the bed. The back of the bed can be lifted so that a patient can eat meals or read a book. Adjustable hospital beds make it easier on the patient and add a dimension of comfort and quality of life.

Hospital beds can be fully electric hospital beds, semi-electric or be operated manually. In one nine-hospital study of 658 people aged 65 and older that underwent surgery for hip fracture, Maryland researchers at the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health found no difference between decubiti in those on beds that were electric versus those that weren't. Either one will make the patient's life more comfortable, though.

Air fluidized therapy beds were reported to reduce the development of decubiti in a study reported in August 2011 in the journal, *Critical Care Nurse*. Doctors at the St. Joseph Health System in Lexington, Kentucky found only one Grade I ulcer develop in 27 patients when they used the bed for an average of 7.9 days, compared to 40 ulcers in 25 patients before the intervention.

The cost of these beds is quite pricey, but still, there was a cost-savings.

Give the bed you are sleeping on much consideration in the treatment of bedsores. It is the easiest thing to change and can definitely impact your healing.

Chapter 17: Guide to Better Sleep



Is there anything more miserable than lying in bed, staring at the clock, tossing and turning, thoughts racing, night after night...unable to fall asleep? Not much. Unfortunately, studies show that as many as 70 million North Americans suffer from chronic sleep loss and/or sleep disorders. Women are especially vulnerable to sleeping problems. Research shows that they are two times more likely than men to have difficulties falling and staying asleep.

In your quest for a good night's rest, there are many common sleep problems that may interfere. For example, because of the hormonal and lifestyle factors

involved, many women experience disturbed sleep patterns throughout their reproductive years. Even beyond the reproductive years, many menopausal and postmenopausal women continue to experience sleep difficulties. Some of these problems are easy to remedy, other problems may require professional help. In the next few sections we will discuss the importance of sleep, ways you can help yourself to a better, more refreshing sleep and when it may be time to seek professional help.

The Importance of Sleep

To the chronically sleepless, the importance of sleep is more than obvious. Your dry eyes, drowsy mind, and drooping body are most likely screaming at you about just how important sleep is. However, lack of sleep can lead to much more than just drowsy days; inadequate sleep can also lead to problems in mood, learning, memory, heart, hormones, and obesity. Following is a summary of the many ways sleep can affect health:

Mood, learning and memory: Most people realize how sleep, or lack thereof, affects their mood. Studies show a distinct increase in irritability in the chronically sleepless. Some experts even link postpartum depression (“baby blues”) to the lack of sleep mothers of newborns typically receive. Learning and memory are also negatively influenced by lack of sleep. One recent study divided 48 healthy adults into three groups—a four-hour sleep/night group, a six-hour sleep/night group, and an eight-hour sleep/night group. Each day of the study the groups were given tasks to test their memory and motor

skills. By day 14 the four-hour sleep/night group had 14 times as many errors compared with their normal abilities. The six-hour sleep/night group performed 11 times as many errors when compared with their normal abilities. In contrast, the group receiving eight hours of sleep per night performed the tasks consistently well and even performed better each day.

Heart health: During proper sleep cycles your heart rate and blood pressure drop by approximately 10%. If you are not sleeping enough this nightly dip in blood pressure may not occur. According to several studies, if this blood pressure dip does not occur you will be more likely to experience strokes, chest pain, irregular heartbeat, heart attacks, and even congestive heart failure.

Hormones: Deep sleep releases essential hormones such as growth hormones and sex hormones. Growth hormone fuels growth in children and boosts muscle mass and the repair of cells and tissues in children and adults. The sex hormones that are released are also important. These sex hormones help the progress of puberty in children and help aid fertility in adult women. Adequate sleep also creates more cytokines in the body—these cellular hormones help the immune system fight various infections. Lack of sleep puts your body under stress and triggers the release of stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline—these hormones exacerbate the abovementioned heart problems.

Obesity: Leptin is an appetite suppressant that increases during sleep. Ghrelin is an appetite stimulant that decreases during sleep. Without enough sleep, the release of these hormones becomes reversed; a recent sleep study demonstrated that healthy individuals sleeping for only four-hours, two nights in a row experienced a 20% drop in leptin (appetite suppressant) and a 20% increase in ghrelin (appetite stimulant). Insulin is another hormone that is influenced by sleep patterns. In one study, 14 healthy, young individuals were allowed to sleep for only four hours a night for six nights in a row. At the conclusion of the study, these healthy, young individuals had insulin and blood sugar levels that mimicked those found in people developing diabetes. Chronic sleeplessness may also promote obesity because it leaves individuals too tired to exercise.

Causes of Sleep Disturbances

There are many psychological disorders that can negatively influence sleep. Schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, depression and autism are all disorders that have been linked to sleep problems. Depression and anxiety, both more prevalent in women, are particularly common. Anxiety frequently impairs falling asleep at night, while depression usually causes early morning wakefulness.

Physical disorders that may interfere with proper sleep include sleep apnea, restless legs syndrome, narcolepsy, and parasomnias (such as sleep-walking, sleep paralysis, and night terrors). If you suspect you are suffering from any of these

psychological or physical disorders, you should seek professional help.

Psychosocial stress may also threaten good sleep. For example, many young women skip sleep in order to cope with work and their roles as wives and mothers. As women age, sleep disturbances may continue because of physical and hormonal changes that make sleep lighter and less sound. Sleep disturbances are especially common during menopause.

Simple Sleep Solutions

Now that we've reviewed the importance of adequate sleep, and common causes of poor sleep, it's time to discover what can be done to reap the benefits of a good night's rest. Fortunately, in the groggy world of the sleepless there are many things you can do to help yourself. Read on for several simple solutions:

- **Schedule:** Start with a regular schedule—just like babies and children, adults can benefit from a regular bedtime routine and a consistent bedtime schedule. Waking at the same time each morning will also help individuals to fall asleep at night. Avoid naps after three p.m.—if you must have a nap to make it through the day, schedule it for early afternoon—any later and it will be difficult to fall asleep at bedtime.
- **Exercise:** Exercising at the right time of day can promote better sleep. Experts suggest exercising in the late afternoon and the early evening. Exercising too late in the evening will have the opposite effect.

- **Caffeine/nicotine/alcohol:** Caffeine, a known stimulant, should be avoided past mid-afternoon. It stays in your body for many hours after your last drink—if you crave a sip of something warm in the evening, try milk or herbal tea. Nicotine is another stimulant to be avoided—nicotine may lead to lighter sleep. Nicotine withdrawal, in heavy smokers, may also cause you to wake too early. Although alcohol is a sedative that makes it easier to fall asleep, it prevents deep sleep and REM sleep, allowing only the lighter stages of sleep. Like heavy smokers, people who drink alcohol may also wake up in the middle of the night when the effects of an alcoholic “nightcap” wear off.
- **Large meals and beverages:** If sleep is what you want, large meals and beverages should be avoided close to bedtime. Even if you are able to fall asleep, overeating and drinking have been shown to interfere with deep sleep. A large meal may cause lighter sleep as the body deals with digestion; too much liquid can also interfere by causing middle of the night trips to the bathroom.
- **Relax:** Relaxation therapy has been used effectively to treat insomnia. You can practice this therapy yourself by progressively tensing and relaxing each of the muscles in your body—start at your toes and work your way all the way up to your facial muscles. Another relaxation technique to try is deep breathing. To begin, sit up straight in a comfortable position. Next, breathe in slowly through your nose and exhale slowly through your mouth. Repeat 2 – 3 times.
- **Don’t lay in bed awake:** People suffering from insomnia can enter into a vicious cycle—trouble falling asleep the previous night leaves them worried about falling asleep the next night, this worry keeps them awake and the cycle begins. To break the cycle of anxiety, try only going to bed when you’re sleepy. If you find yourself in bed, unable to fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and engage in a relaxing activity, such as reading. Once you feel sleepy again, return to bed. If you are still unable to sleep, hop out of bed again and pursue a relaxing activity until you are sleepy. This reconditioning therapy has been used effectively to treat insomnia.
- **Hot bath:** Not only can hot baths be a great way to wind down at the end of a hectic day, they also provide a drop in your body temperature that helps you feel sleepy.
- **Sunlight exposure:** Sunlight exposure is essential to regulating sleep patterns. You should aim for at least 30 minutes of natural sunlight a day. Experts recommend that individuals who are having sleep troubles should raise their time in the sun to an hour a day.
- **Good sleeping environment:** Rid your bedroom of anything that might distract you—bright lights, noise, televisions, computers and too warm temperatures should all be avoided. Sleep comes easier to those in dark, cool, quiet bedrooms supplied with a comfortable mattress, pillow, and blanket.

Hopefully, one or more of these self-help suggestions will bring you the relief you need... if not, it may be time to see a doctor. Your doctor may be able to diagnose your problem through specialized tests such as a polysomnography (an overnight sleep study conducted in a lab), or a multiple sleep latency test (MSLT) which measures daytime sleepiness. For certain situations, your doctor may prescribe sleeping pills as a short term solution. Or, she may change or discontinue medications that are disrupting your sleep.

Everyone needs, and deserves, adequate sleep—it is as essential to your health as proper exercise and nutrition. Although it may take a while to discover your specific sleep formula—relief is in sight. So...sweet dreams...sleep tight...don't let the bedbugs bite!

Chapter 18: Improve Sleep Through Better Nutrition



So many people look for sleep help through many avenues: getting a new mattress, going to bed at 10 p.m. every night, and using the bed only for sleeping. These are wonderful sleep help strategies, which are technically referred to as practicing good sleep hygiene.

But did you know that nutrition also plays a huge role in offering effective sleep help? In fact, adjusting nutrition may play an even bigger role in providing sleep help than purchasing a brand new mattress!

Nutritional sleep help is a two-pronged approach: what to eliminate from your diet, and what to add to your diet. There are several sleep help strategies within each.

Nutrition Sleep Help Strategy

#1: Eliminate Caffeine

People think nothing of drinking coffee and soft drinks throughout the morning and afternoon. Yet completely eliminating caffeine from your diet is the best sleep help you could ever hope to get!

Caffeine is a powerful stimulant rivaled only by illegal drugs. Drinking six cups of coffee is the equivalent of downing one amphetamine, or 5 mg of dextroamphetamine.ⁱ Just one cup of coffee contains 110 mg of caffeine. Caffeine revs up the central nervous system, making it more difficult to fall asleep. You can have the most comfortable bed in the world, but caffeine will prevent you from falling asleep!

Caffeine's half life is three to five hours.ⁱⁱ That means that caffeine and its effects linger within your body for several hours after you consume it. Your mattress can be as cushiony as a dreamy cloud, but if you drink caffeine in the evening, it may take what seems like an eternity to fall asleep. Further, you may wake up frequently during the course of the night, tossing and turning in bed.

If you absolutely cannot live without caffeine—and you can—you should drink it before noon. For even better sleep help, you should limit your intake to two cups of coffee, which is approximately 200 mg of caffeine.ⁱⁱⁱ You should avoid consuming caffeine for a full eight hours before bed; your body needs several hours to completely eliminate the substance and its side effects.^{iv}

The reason that caffeine is of no sleep help is that it stimulates the body's stress response. In other words, it triggers production of the stress hormone adrenaline—the rush that fuels us with fight-or-flight power in the face of grave danger. This causes muscle tension, anxiety, irritability and insomnia. That is certainly no sleep help!

Another hormone that caffeine manipulates is melatonin. Unlike adrenalin, melatonin is actually a sleep-help hormone. The setting sun at dusk triggers the hypothalamus in the brain to tell the pineal gland, also in the brain, to stimulate melatonin. This sleep-help hormone is released in the body in increasing amounts between dusk and midnight to help us sleep.^v ^{vi} This sleep-help hormone also keeps us young; hence the term “beauty sleep!”

Caffeine also stresses out your adrenal glands. And when your adrenal glands are taxed to the max, it causes insomnia. These are two small thumb-sized glands, one perched atop each kidney. Not only do the adrenal glands manufacture adrenaline, but they determine your overall energy level. We'll discuss the sleep help strategy of nutritionally supporting the adrenal glands shortly.

So eliminating caffeine from your diet is the number one sleep help strategy! Caffeine is not super addictive, so it's easy to remove from your diet. It's easiest to eliminate it gradually over the course of a week rather than going cold turkey. This will prevent withdrawal headaches and psychological mind games. Just drink one less

caffeinated beverage per day until you're at zero. Then say hello to sleeping soundly in bed!

Nutrition Sleep Help Strategy #2: Eliminate or Dramatically Reduce Alcohol

It's true that drinking one glass of wine at dinner provides flavonoids that support the heart. The problem is, the sugars in alcohol disrupt sleep. It's a myth that alcohol will provide sleep help benefits since it is technically classified as a depressant. The truth is, the way that your body metabolizes the sugars in alcohol disrupts sleep. This causes generally lighter sleep more frequent waking when you are in bed.

Further, alcoholic beverages can suppress certain stages of sleep—specifically, the crucial stages of deep sleep.^{vii} This provides zero sleep help whatsoever. Your body absolutely needs deep sleep for proper brain function, tissue repair, muscle building and immune system rejuvenation.

And here's another sleep help tip: If you suffer from chronic snoring or sleep apnea, stay away from alcohol! It markedly worsens these conditions.^{viii}

Drinking alcohol will also likely make you have to get out of bed to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. So not only will your sleep be lighter in general, but it will almost certainly be interrupted.

So to make the most of your mattress time, try to limit yourself to just a couple drinks per week.

Another sleep help tip is to drink any alcoholic beverages as early in the evening as possible, preferably with a meal.

Nutrition Sleep Help Strategy #3: Don't Eat Too Late

Some people like to enjoy a snack just before bedtime. But even if it's a sleep-help type of food, it will interfere with sleep if you eat within two hours of bedtime. We'll discuss sleep-help snacks shortly. Your digestive system needs a couple of hours to completely metabolize food before you go to bed.

Another no-no that sabotages quality mattress time is the midnight snack! Like eating too close to bedtime, the metabolism process following a midnight snack will make your sleep lighter and cause more frequent awakenings when you are in bed.

In general, you should watch what and how much you eat in the evenings so that going to bed is restorative rather than fitful. If you eat a huge, late restaurant dinner of Four-Alarm Burritos, you'll feel miserable when you get horizontal in bed. You may also suffer from heartburn, which will prevent you from drifting off into dreamland.

Another sleep help tip is to avoid sugary sweets in the evenings between dinner and bed times. Blood sugar fluctuations instigate insomnia. Sugar is also related to irritability; a racing mind can make it near impossible to fall asleep once you get in bed. And if you awaken in the middle of the night, your sugar-fired brain will keep you awake.

Not only does eating too late interfere with quality mattress time, but so does drinking too late. Play it safe and stop all liquid intake for one hour before going to bed. This will prevent having to get out of bed in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom. Another sleep help tip: urinate as many times as you can muster in the 30 minutes before going to bed!

Nutrition Sleep Help Strategy

#4: Eat for Your Adrenals

Those little adrenal glands we discussed earlier also produce the stress hormone cortisol plus the youth hormone DHEA. Cortisol is beneficial—but only in the proper balance. Daily fluctuations in cortisol levels induce insomnia, which in turn churns out more cortisol, creating a vicious cycle that hampers quality mattress time. Further, ample sleep in bed helps the adrenal glands produce sufficient DHEA levels, which keeps cortisol levels in their proper balance.

Symptoms indicating that those little sleep help glands are stressed out include:

- Experiencing difficulty try to fall asleep in bed, usually from worrying
- Feeling groggy when you wake up in the morning
- Finding it hard to peel yourself out of bed
- Needing caffeine to wake up for the morning
- Needing caffeine and sugar-loaded snacks to function, especially late in the morning and in the afternoon
- Craving sweets
- An inability to think clearly

- Impaired memory
- Frequent headaches
- Hypoglycemia
- Recurring infections
- Having low sex drive
- Feeling depressed^{ix}

Here's how you can get sleep help from your daily diet to support your adrenal glands:

- Indulge in a diet teeming with whole foods.
- Dramatically reduce the amount of refined sugar that you eat.
- Eat plenty of low-fat protein with each snack and meal, such as beans, hummus, tofu, seeds, nuts and fish.
- Avoid cleansing and fasting diets, which will fatigue the adrenals.
- Take 25 to 50 mg of a B complex vitamin every day.
- Take 500 to 1,000 mg daily of vitamin B-5, which is pantothenic acid. Divide it into smaller doses taken throughout the day. Snack times and mealtimes are convenient. Vitamin B-5 helps the adrenals produce energy.
- Take 500 to 2,000 mg of vitamin C. Like vitamin B-5, divide it into several doses taken throughout the day. Vitamin C supports the adrenal glands' blood vessels.
- Take 300 to 400 mg of magnesium every day. Again, divide the doses over the course of the day. You should take it in the form of citrate, fumarate, glycinate or malate.
- Take 15 to 30 mg of zinc every day.
- Take 100 mg Siberian ginseng two times every day. Take it before 3 p.m. so its energy-

producing effects don't interfere with quality mattress time.

These sleep help tips will help your adrenals keep cortisol levels in perfect balance!

Nutrition Sleep Help Strategy #5: Take Mineral Supplements

Not only does magnesium provide adrenal help, but it also provides sleep help! If you don't get enough magnesium, you may sleep lighter and wake up more often when you're in bed.^x You may also experience full-blown insomnia if you have a magnesium deficiency.^{xi} We need 400 mg of magnesium every day. Taking a magnesium supplement can seriously improve the quantity and quality of your mattress time.^{xii} If you're experiencing muscle tension, you can take a magnesium supplement before bed to relax your muscles; this will impart more sound sleep.^{xiii}

You should note that some medications can prevent optimum magnesium absorption. This is most often diuretics that are used to treat high blood pressure. Also, you should consult your physician before taking magnesium if you have heart or kidney health issues.^{xiv}

Another sleep help mineral is copper. If you get less than 1 mg of copper in your daily diet, it may take you longer fall asleep when you go to bed; also, you may not feel well-rested the next day. But you will sleep better if you get 2 mg of copper every day. Foods high in copper include dried beans, seeds, nuts, mushrooms, lobster and cooked oysters.^{xv}

If you get less than one-third of the U.S. Recommended Daily Allowance of iron, another sleep help mineral, you may not sleep well. Women of menstruating age should get 15 mg of iron every day, while post-menopausal women and men should get 10 mg daily. This will help ensure sound sleep when you're in bed, with fewer awakenings and better overall sleep quality.^{xvi}

A multivitamin supplement that contains the above-listed amounts of these minerals can be a big sleep help!

Nutrition Sleep Help Strategy #6: Eat a Sleep-Beckoning Snack

Foods that contain tryptophan are the biggest sleep help. Tryptophan is an amino acid; the body converts it to melatonin and serotonin to beckon the sandman.^{xvii}

Tryptophan-containing sleep help foods include:

- Potatoes
- Bananas
- Dates
- Grains, especially oats
- Legumes
- Dairy products, preferably from organic and/or local dairy sources. They don't contain growth hormones, antibiotics or other stimulating chemicals. Yogurt and kefir, which is drinkable yogurt, are notably effective sleep help.^{xviii xix}

Other sleep help foods include:

- Lettuce
- Spinach
- Nuts, especially peanuts
- Poppy seeds^{xx xxi}

Enjoying a snack composed of these sleep help foods a couple of hours before bedtime will impart high-quality ZZZ's when you hit the mattress. If you eat any protein in your snack, such as nuts, be sure to eat more carbohydrates than protein. Protein contains tyrosine, a type of amino acid that activates the brain. This sleep help trick will make tryptophan more readily available to your brain so it can more easily produce melatonin and serotonin.

Nutrition Sleep Help Strategy

#7: Enjoy a Healthy Diet

Here are some handy sleep help tips for your overall diet:

- Follow a regular meal schedule. Eating on a sporadic schedule can be detrimental to sleep patterns when you go to bed.
- Avoid dieting. Dieting causes cortisol levels to fluctuate, setting the stage for insomnia.
- Eat a healthy diet that is high in whole foods and low in refined sugar.

These sleep help tips will help you get the most out of your mattress mileage. Who knew that sleep help could taste so great?

i Schutte-Rodin, S. (2006). Circadian Rhythm Sleep Disorder Due to Drug or Substance. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from Sleep Education Web site: <http://sleepeducation.com/Disorder.aspx?id=61>

ii Schutte-Rodin, S. (2006). Circadian Rhythm Sleep Disorder Due to Drug or Substance. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from Sleep Education Web site: <http://sleepeducation.com/Disorder.aspx?id=61>

iii (2008). Drugs and Sleep Deprivation. Retrieved January 28, 2008 from SleepDeprivation.com Web site: <http://www.sleep-deprivation.com/articles/causes-of-sleep-deprivation/drugs-and-sleep-deprivation.php>

iv Mayo Clinic Staff. (2007). 10 tips for better sleep. Retrieved January 28, 2008 from Mayo Clinic Web site: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sleep/HQ01387>

v (2008). Sleep. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from Wikipedia Web site: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleep>

vi Mayo Clinic Staff. (2007). Insomnia. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from Mayo Clinic Web site: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/insomnia/DS00187>

vii (2008). Sleep. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from Wikipedia Web site: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleep>

viii (2008). Tips for Healthy Sleep. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from Sleepnet Web site: <http://www.sleepnet.com/tips.html>

ix Northrup, C., M.D. (1998, 1994). Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom. New York, New York. Bantam Books.

x (2008). Insomnia. Retrieved January 28, 2008 from Mother Nature Web site: <http://www.mothernature.com/Library/Bookshelf/Books/10/74.cfm>

- xi (2008). Insomnia. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from Wikipedia Web site: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insomnia>
- xii (2008). Insomnia. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from Wikipedia Web site: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insomnia>
- xiii Dr. Leia on Insomnia Causes and Menopause – Tests You Should Have and Info on Natural Sleep Aids. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from Healthy New Age Web site: <http://www.healthynewage.com/Super-Blue-Stuff.htm>
- xiv (2008). Insomnia. Retrieved January 28, 2008 from Mother Nature Web site: <http://www.mothenature.com/Library/Bookshelf/Books/10/74.cfm>
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- xvi (2008). Insomnia. Retrieved January 28, 2008 from Mother Nature Web site: <http://www.mothenature.com/Library/Bookshelf/Books/10/74.cfm>
- xvii Berge, K., M.D. Foods that help you sleep: Does warm milk really work? Retrieved January 28, 2008 from the Mayo Clinic Web site: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/foods-that-help-you-sleep/AN01582>
- xviii Wood, R. (2007). Insomnia. Retrieved January 28, 2008 from the Rebecca Wood Web site: <http://www.rwood.com/Articles/Insomnia.htm>
- xix Berge, K., M.D. Foods that help you sleep: Does warm milk really work? Retrieved January 28, 2008 from the Mayo Clinic Web site: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/foods-that-help-you-sleep/AN01582>
- xx Wood, R. (2007). Insomnia. Retrieved January 28, 2008 from the Rebecca Wood Web site: <http://www.rwood.com/Articles/Insomnia.htm>
- xxi (2008). Insomnia. Retrieved January 28, 2008 from Mother Nature Web site: <http://www.mothenature.com/library/bookshelf/books/15/16.cfm>

The image features a dark, solid background with two prominent, wavy, light-gray lines that sweep across the frame. The top line starts on the left, dips, and then rises towards the right. The bottom line follows a similar pattern, starting lower and ending higher. The text is positioned in the center-left area, within the dark field.

SECTION THREE

*Home Interior
Decorating*

Chapter 19: Building a Green Bedroom from the Ground Up



When you think of the word “home,” chances are that your bedroom is the first room that comes to mind. Your bedroom is your refuge: a place to dream, a place to rest, and a place to retreat when the outside world becomes too stressful. Naturally, you want that room to be as safe and healthy as possible. However, many common products, such as paints and carpets, can emit harmful fumes called Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC’s). VOC’s are a class of chemicals that includes substances like toluene, formaldehyde and benzene. According to the EPA, these chemicals show up indoors at relatively high concentrations, approximately 2 to 5 times higher than the amounts present in outside air.¹ In the short term, they can cause health problems like allergies and asthma. Chronic exposure may increase your risk of cancer and could damage your liver, kidneys and

nervous system.² These chemicals are not good for the environment, either. If you are concerned about the health of our planet, you should also be concerned about the health of your bedroom. A green bedroom is healthier for you and healthier for the Earth. This article will show you how to build one from the ground up.

Flooring

First, take a look at the floor underneath your feet. Is it carpet? Everyone loves the soft feeling of carpet on bare feet, but did you know that indoor carpeting is one of the most common sources of VOC's?³ Also, the chemicals used to manufacture carpets in carpet mills can pollute streams, rivers and groundwater. For example, perfluorooctanoic acid, a likely carcinogen used to manufacture stain-resistant carpets, has been found at high concentrations in the Conasauga River in Georgia, just downstream from the Dalton carpet mills.⁴ Chemicals like these can build up in the bodies of people and animals that live near the mills. Some of these chemicals are so persistent and travel so easily that they can also pollute areas hundreds of thousands of miles away. Perfluorooctanoic acid has been found inside the bodies of polar bears, in spite of the fact that there are no carpet mills in the Arctic.

What's the solution? Instead of choosing synthetic carpet, choose a natural flooring option such as bamboo. As long as it's kept from becoming invasive, bamboo is an ideal earth-friendly material. It's renewable, grows quickly and requires very little chemical "support" to grow. Reclaimed hardwood is another excellent

choice for flooring. New wood floors can be "green," too, if the forest is managed sustainably. Look for the "Forest Stewardship Council" seal of approval. Some types of finishes and laminates used on wood floors can emit harmful chemicals into the air. Remember to look for floor materials labeled no or low-VOC. If you want something soft on your feet, look for untreated, organic wool carpeting and rugs. Area rugs made out of hemp or from recycled fabric are also good choices. Hemp, marijuana's non-psychoactive twin, is considered to be an environmentally friendly material because it requires very little water, herbicide or pesticide.

Paint and Wallpaper

Moving on to the walls, paint is another common source of indoor air pollution. Petroleum-based paints can emit VOC's for years after they dry. Fortunately, there are paints available that emit fewer or no chemicals. These paints also have the advantage of being less hazardous to work with and dispose of. Look for natural latex paints labeled low or no-VOC, paints made from milk protein or even paints made from pigments mixed with clay. If you'd prefer wallpaper, look for wallpaper made from natural materials, such as grass cloth or organic cotton. Another good choice is barkskin, a type of textured wallpaper made of organic bark material. If you are buying wood-pulp wallpaper, look for the Forest Stewardship Council Seal of approval. Don't forget to use a natural adhesive, too. You can either buy natural wallpaper paste or make your own from white flour, water and alum.

Mattress Selection

Now that you have the walls and the floor taken care of, what about the bed itself? Conventional mattresses are often manufactured using chemicals such as antimony, formaldehyde, and toluene. These chemicals are usually used to give the mattresses better fire resistance or better stain resistance, but at what cost? Part of the problem is that nobody knows for sure. As the Washington Post reports, “of the nearly 80,000 chemicals regularly bought and sold today, according to the National Academy of Sciences, fewer than 10 percent have been tested for their capacity to cause cancer or do other damage.”⁵ This does not mean that your conventional mattress is poisoning you, only that nobody is sure what the long-term effects of small exposures to these chemicals really are. According to National Geographic’s Green Guide, off-gassing from synthetic mattresses can be minimized by vacuuming often, keeping the room well-ventilated, and using a HEPA air Filter.⁶ However, there are mattresses on the market today made from natural materials that don’t off-gas VOC’s. Also, many synthetic mattresses are made out of petroleum-based chemicals, so finding non-petroleum-based alternatives helps preserve our natural resources and reduces the carbon footprint of the mattress.

Fortunately, avoiding synthetic mattresses does not mean a return to sleeping on mattresses stuffed with straw or corn husks. Today, there are much more comfortable natural alternatives available. The gold standard for a natural good night’s sleep is a latex mattress. Latex is a natural substance that is made from the sap of the rubber

tree. It can be used to produce a mattress that is supportive, yet supremely comfortable. In fact, the feel of a latex mattress is often said to resemble that of memory foam. Latex mattresses distribute your weight correctly to keep uncomfortable pressure points from developing. They can be manufactured using two different methods: the older Dunlop process and the Talalay process. The Talalay process usually produces a softer mattress. However, it is more expensive than the Dunlop process.

One other environmental advantage of natural latex is that the act of harvesting it does not kill the tree. After the rubber tree is tapped, it keeps growing. As it grows, it removes carbon dioxide from our atmosphere. This also means that latex can be sustainably harvested from the rainforest. In Brazil, rubber tappers have lived in the rainforest for generations. They have been one of the main groups trying to preserve the forest along with their way of life. Chico Mendes, one of Brazil’s pioneering activists for sustainable rainforest development, was a rubber tapper.⁷ Depending on where it comes from, buying natural latex may provide an economic incentive for preserving the rainforest. However, latex can also be manufactured synthetically. Most mattresses being produced today use a blend of natural and synthetic latex. Look for mattresses that are made from a high proportion of natural latex.

To create a match made in heaven, top your new latex mattress off with one of the new soy-based memory foam mattress toppers (available in complete mattress sets as well). Although

they do contain synthetic chemicals, soy-based memory foam replaces some of the petroleum used in the original recipe with a product made from soybean oil. This results in a finished product with a much lower carbon footprint. For example, memory foam products made from soybean oil require 61 percent less non-renewable energy to manufacture, and produce 36 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions.⁸ You can find both memory foam mattress toppers and entire memory foam mattresses that are made from soy. Since they feel exactly like regular memory foam, these products are a great way to help the environment and sleep in comfort at the same time.

Sheets, Linens and Pillows

Now that you've chosen the mattress, what should you put on top of it? Sheets and bed linens are often made from conventionally grown cotton. Worldwide in 2003, 55 million pounds of pesticide were used to grow conventional cotton.⁹ That's approximately 4.3 pounds of pesticide per acre! These chemicals often escape from the cotton fields and poison groundwater. Pesticides can also harm the farm workers hired to pick the cotton. Instead of conventionally-grown cotton, choose organic cotton sheets and quilts, or choose sumptuous fabrics made from bamboo or hemp. Quilts made from recycled clothing are another interesting and unique decorating choice.

No bed is complete without lots of fluffy pillows. Look for pillows covered in organic cotton or bamboo. Also, check the label to see what the

pillow is stuffed with. Most pillows are filled with either down or polyester stuffing. Down is extremely comfortable and a renewable resource. This makes it a much greener choice than polyester. You can also try pillows filled with buckwheat instead. Buckwheat is very comfortable, conforms to the contours of your head and neck and deters dust mites.¹⁰ Pillows with polyester stuffing can be eco-friendly, too, as long as the fill is made of recycled materials such as plastic soda bottles.

Bedroom Furniture

Now that you've got the cozy, comfortable, eco-friendly bed of your dreams, what about the other furniture in your bedroom? Most of the furniture on the market today is made at least partly of particleboard. As a building material, particleboard sounds eco-friendly enough at first. After all, it's made of recycled wood and sawdust that would otherwise be thrown away. The problem with particleboard arises when these wood chips are glued together. Most manufacturers use urea formaldehyde resins, which produce formaldehyde emissions of around .2 parts per million from the finished furniture. Health experts recommend a level of exposure of to formaldehyde of .1 parts per billion or lower.¹¹ Instead of particleboard, look for solid wood furniture that's either used or made from reclaimed wood. Some particleboard furniture is also made using phenol formaldehyde resin, a different type of adhesive that emits much less formaldehyde.

Cooling and Heating

Another important part of going green is conserving energy wherever possible. If you like to cuddle up under lots of blankets in a cool room when you sleep, use a ceiling fan instead of cranking up the AC. Put blinds and curtains on your windows and use them strategically. Open the curtains to let the warm sunlight in on cold days and close them to keep the room cool on hot days. Also, use energy-efficient lighting. Whenever possible, that means harnessing and magnifying natural sunlight. Again, use your windows strategically to let light in, and place mirrors where they can reflect light back into rest of the room. Don't forget to caulk around the windows to seal up cracks! By using less energy, you'll lower your carbon footprint and pay less in utility bills.

Lighting

When you have to turn on a light, select LED's or compact fluorescent bulbs to save energy. Everyone wants soft lighting for the bedroom, not the harsh white light you get from older CFLs. However, the newer CFLs can produce warm, natural light just like incandescent bulbs. You just have to know what to look for on the package. To make sure you are getting the right amount of brightness, check to see how many lumens the bulb produces. An 870-lumen fluorescent bulb will give you the same amount of brightness as a 60-watt incandescent. For a warmer color, look for bulbs with a lower temperature ratings, around 2,700 to 5,000 Kelvin. Although red light has a "warmer" color than blue light, it is actually lower on the spectrum and therefore has a

lower temperature. Finally, look for a bulb with a high color rendering index (CRI). The coloring rendering index measures the ability of the bulb to illuminate colors in a natural way. Natural daylight has a CRI of 100, but anything over 80 is good. If you can't afford to make your bedroom completely green right now, that's fine. Most people have limited resources, so going green is something that often has to be done one thing at a time.

Final Thought

If you can't afford to get new flooring right now but you desperately need a new mattress, just focus on choosing a green mattress. The most important thing is that you keep these "green" guidelines in mind whenever you need to replace something in your bedroom or when you decide it's time to remodel.

- 1 <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html>
- 2 <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/voc/>
- 3 <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/voc/>
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- 7 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chico_Mendes
- 8 <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/life/homegarden/5005594.html>
- 9 <http://www.motherearthnews.com/Nature-Community/Organic-Cotton-Benefits.aspx>
- 10 <http://www.summasleep.com/productinfo.html>
- 11 <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/access/1487478981.html?dids=1487478981:1487478981&FMT=FT&FMTS=ABS:FT&fmac=7ccc2967fb51539b75073c449f32139d&date=May+31%2C+2008&author=Katherine+Salant&desc=A+Solution+to+the+Particleboard+Problem%3F>

Chapter 20: Bedroom Decorating Guide and Tips



Bedroom décor can often be one area that is frequently overlooked or at least put off until a later time because it is not one of the public areas within the home. Regardless of whether others tend to see our bedrooms or not, it is still important to give some thought and consideration to planning the décor of your bedroom. A bedroom should be a space that serves as a comfortable retreat, a place where you can rest when you are exhausted, a getaway from the rest of the world and a room that provides a glimpse into your own personality.

The first step in decorating any bedroom, whether it is the master bedroom, your child's bedroom or a spare guest room is to look at the layout of the room. While it would be wonderful if all bedrooms were spacious this is

not always the case. Some bedrooms are larger than others, some contain obstructions that must be worked around and some simply have an odd layout. Regardless of the layout; however, you can usually find a unique way in which to design the room so that it feels fresh and interesting.

While one of the most traditional techniques is to place a bed with the headboard flush against a wall, you may wish to use a more interesting technique. One of the most popular techniques is to place the headboard of the bed in the corner of the room. This will make the bed the focal point of the room, which can be advantageous if you have an interesting headboard.

Of course, if you happen to have a gorgeous view outside the window of your bedroom, it is also a good idea to position the bed so that it faces the window. This will allow you to wake up every morning to an inspiring and rejuvenating view.

Ultimately, the type of bed which you choose should be aligned with your personal style. If you happen to have a deep romantic streak, you may wish to choose a canopy style bed. While canopy beds with four posters are among the most traditional options, there also many other options available on the market as well. For example, you may wish to choose a crown canopy, which does not offer as much enclosure, yet still gives the hint of draping.

For a more unique and modern look, consider a bed with mixed materials. Mixed wood and metal headboards in a variety of styles are currently

quite popular. These types of beds look great with solid bedding as well as geometric patterns.

Wood beds can easily lend a traditional look or a more modern look depending on the design and the accents and bedding that are used in conjunction with them. A sleigh bed, for example, is a very popular traditional style of bed that can be easily combined with plush bedding to create a traditional, classic look in your bedroom.

Of course, if you are after a more modern look you might consider the same sleigh bed featuring modern lines and combined with solid colors, stripes or geometric patterns.

While a bedroom should be pleasing to the eye it should also be comfortable as well. In many cases, bed partners have difficulty in finding a bed that suits both their preferences. This could be because one person needs to be elevated while sleeping while the other prefers a flatter position for improved comfort. A split adjustable bed can provide a perfect compromise that will suit the needs of both people.

When it comes to actually decorating your bedroom, your tastes will play a large role. If you like the idea of a shabby chic look in the room it may not be necessary to obtain matching side tables, dressers and chests. In this case, you can easily mix and match iron and wood to create a hodgepodge that is quite pleasing to the idea. If you are looking to create a more traditional and classic look; you will naturally wish to choose a wooden headboard and matching side tables. A

more modern look would typically employ an iron headboard and complimentary side pieces.

Decorating the Spare Room or Guest Room

Decorating a spare room or guest room can be somewhat of a challenge, especially if the room must serve dual purposes; as is often the case. In many situations, a guest room also serves as a home office. Even if you must also use your guest room for another purpose it is important to keep in mind that you can still create a guest room that is comfortable and pleasant for your guests.

One way to furnish a room that needs to serve dual purposes is to use a futon. During the day a futon provides the perfect place to lounge while another family member works on the computer. It also provides a comfortable place to watch TV or play games if your spare bedroom also happens to be the family room. When you are expecting company, the futon can be easily converted into a comfortable bed. Futons are available in a wide variety of different frame designs to perfectly compliment the rest of your furnishings.

For example, you may wish to choose a solid wood futon frame with a magazine rack on the sides. This type of futon frame actually does not really look any different from any other seating arrangement. When it is folded out; however, it provides comfortable sleeping accommodations.

For a more modern and trendy look you might also wish to consider a leather futon. This type of bed and seating arrangement is certainly

modern looking yet versatile enough to serve dual purposes. Leather futons are also perfect for studio apartments in which living space and sleeping space are often all in one.

In addition to futons, daybeds also form a versatile seating and sleeping option for spare rooms and guest rooms. Trundle beds, which pop up, can double the amount of sleeping space you are able to offer guests.

To make a workspace and spare room even more versatile consider using an armoire computer desk that can be easily closed so your work area is closed and hidden from view when you have guests spending the night.

When it comes to colors for a spare bedroom, try to keep the colors as neutral and calm as possible. This will give you a serene environment in which to work and provide a calm place for your guests to rest.

To ensure plenty of storage space as well as floor space, consider using a portion of the closet to store office supplies and reference books while reserving the other section of the closet for your guests to hang clothing. This will eliminate the need to take up a lot of floor space with shelves. You may even find that you have enough space left over to create a small seating area.

Decorating a Girls Bedroom

Decorating a girl's bedroom can be fun and easy as many little girls tend to prefer certain design elements. Butterflies and flowers tend to show up

in many decorating schemes; however, a number of girls also prefer character themes. The ever popular princess theme is frequently a hit.

Generally, it is a good idea to involve the child in the choices used in the selection of her room décor. Almost all girls have very decided ideas regarding their preferences. If they are involved in the design decisions, they are more likely to feel comfortable in the room as well as to help in keeping their room neat and well-maintained.

While elementary age girls can certainly help in making the decisions regarding their bedroom décor, tweens and teens can actually assist in the process of decorating their room. This can be a great bonding project for daughters and parents. Begin by discussing ideas which she may have and then move on to reviewing decorating sites, magazines and catalogs to find a design that will work for her style and your budget. While working on the design of her room you may be quite surprised to learn something about her personality you did not know.

There are a number of ways in which decorating a girls room can be approached. If the girl in question has a favorite color, it can be quite easy to begin with that color as a base and then build the design around it. Accent pieces, window treatments and wall borders are all examples of ways in which you can color can be used.

The choice of bed in a girl's room can usually help to form the focal point for the room. When choosing a bed, it is often best to consider a bed

and headboard that can grow with the child. There are a number of ways to do this. A canopy bed, for example, can easily be outfitted with soft draperies that are appropriate for a younger girl and then updated with something more mature as she grows older. Twin headboards, including wood headboards and wrought iron headboards, are also examples of furnishing pieces that can grow with the age of the child when combined with age appropriate bedding selections.

Daybeds are always a popular hit with girls of all ages because they provide easy seating space during the day and a comfortable place to rest at night. Trundle daybeds also provide space for all of those sleepovers she is sure to have through the years, without taking up valuable floor space. If space is truly at a premium in her room, you may also wish to consider a daybed with under bed storage. If you do decide to outfit her room with a daybed, be sure to consider a complete daybed linen package that contains the specially sized comforter as well as shams, bolsters and pillows.

Decorating a Boy's Bedroom

Decorating a boy's bedroom can sometimes be viewed as somewhat of a challenge; however, when broken down into segments decorating a boy's bedroom can be just as interesting and easy as decorating a girl's bedroom.

As with a girl's bedroom it is often best to attempt to design a bedroom that he will enjoy for several years rather than a bedroom in which he is likely to lose interest after just a few months. While many children frequently have favorite characters,

they will likely outgrow those interests within a year at the most. One way to compromise on this topic is to create a bedroom that can easily grow with your child and then focus their character interests in items that can be easily replaced without too much expense such as with window treatments, bedding and accent pieces.

Larger items, such as beds and headboards, should be chosen with the idea that they will continue to serve the child for several more years. Wooden headboards are often the best choice for boys. When boys are young, wooden headboards can easily serve as the backdrop for a nautical theme or cowboy theme; both of which are often quite popular with young boys. When he grows out of these themes wooden headboards can easily be integrated into a more mature theme, particularly with the use of dark solid colors and plaids.

When it comes to colors, you may find that it is best to begin with his favorite color. If the color he has chosen is too dark for the actual wall color, you can always paint the wall a neutral color and then incorporate his favorite color into stencils, wall borders, etc.

There are a number of different design elements and accent pieces that can be incorporated into a boy's bedroom, including framed posters of favorite movie and cartoon characters. You may also choose to display some of his own artwork in his room. Murals depicting favorite scenes, such as a jungle or space scene also tend to be popular with young boys. These can be easily created so they are appropriate for all ages. In the event he

does outgrow it, it can be easily painted over as he grows older.

Finally, do not forget to include plenty of storage for clothing and toys. Wooden toy boxes and crates are ideal for young boys and can be easily converted into other uses when they are older. A desk is also a great item to include in any young child's room. When they are young, a desk provides the perfect surface for all of those building activities which young boys tend to enjoy and as they grow older it will provide the ideal study setting.

Chapter 21: 2011 Bedroom Decorating Trends



Are you ready to update your drab bedroom into something fantastically perfect? The decorating trends for 2011 allow you to have the bedroom you have always wanted; clean, serene, and beautiful. By updating your bedroom using current trends you can ensure that your master bedroom remains modern for many years to come. Nine Clouds Beds hopes this guide provides a helpful start to your new look.

Colors

Time was once that one color scheme dominated the yearly trend; white, pastels, reds, etc. Nowadays you can have your choice of a host of colours. Whether you choose a monochrome effect or jazz up your room with a

variety of colours, you can have the perfect scheme for your daily getaway. Here are some ideas for inspiration:

Natural: If you've ever wanted to make your bedroom akin to a haven in the wilderness then choose some of this year's trendy colors in natural shades. Picture medium to dark browns, mossy greens, and light greys. Throw in a dash of orange, red, or purple if you want to have a bit more personality in the room.

Botanicals: If you love natural tones, but like a bit more color than dark browns or green, consider combining more botanical greens and combine them with shades of blue. Imagine sleeping under a canopy of palm trees by a sparkling blue sea, and bring those colours home to your bedroom.

Powerful Pink: Pink isn't the girly color it used to be – it's bold and gorgeous. Sizzling pinks can bring sophistication to a drab bedroom, and can be combined with other shades (like grey and brown) to make for a beautiful sleeping area, for males and females alike. If overall pink is a bit too much, just add a dash here and there to brighten up your sleeping area.

Luxury Lavender & Gold: Ever wanted a room fit for royalty? Consider combining shades of lavender and gold or silver to make a luscious statement. Pick out some shimmery wallpaper and a luxury duvet cover, pair it with a gorgeous ornate lamp and metallic cushions and you will have a room that you can be proud of.

Black and White: Black and white never goes out of style, and it can add a level of sophistication to any bedroom, large or small. Paint the walls a lovely white or grey-tone, and get some new bedding for an instant change. Add some gold or silver tones for an added touch of class, or consider some bold black and white wallpapers and fabrics for an extra bold statement.

Wallpapers

Printable: These amazing wallpapers can be easily installed in any room, and can be painted quickly down the road if the trends change down the road, making them amazingly flexible and a great long-term investment in your décor plans. Get brave and install wallpaper on all four walls – or just behind your bed for a fun statement.

Subdued Tones: Look for tone-on-tone wallpapers to add a subtle change to your bedroom. These double-print papers can spruce up any room – consider adding them to a guest room or hallway as well. While they may not be as bold as some papers, they are the perfect way to change the look of a room with a more complex pattern than paint.

Metallics: Bronze, gold, silver – metallic wallpapers can effect a remarkable change in a bedroom and turn it into a high-class haven for sleeping. Look for hand-painted designs if you prefer quality, or even consider adding a touch of metallic to your wallpaper yourself, all you need is a brush, some paint, and a little time! For a fully regal look consider papering your whole room in a metallic glow.

Earth Tones: Bold, beautiful florals in earth tones can both brighten your room, and if you stick to greens and browns you can match with pretty much any décor. For a splash of colour you can choose some hibiscus prints, roses, or other botanicals. Coordinate the rest of your bedroom by matching your textiles to one or more of the colours in the paper, or use similar tones.

Schemes

If you are finding all the wallpaper and colour choosing to be a bit overwhelming, consider starting with a scheme and working from there. All you need is one idea to drive your inspiration and see where it takes you. Here are a few suggestions:

Spa Serenity: Do you want your bedroom to be a haven of peace and serenity? Consider adopting a “spa” feeling in your room. Start with some peaceful blues and greens, or choose earth tones that provide a soothing, calming feeling. Invest in some high-quality bedding, a gorgeous chandelier, and a myriad of throw pillows to make your room calm and comfortable. Consider also adding some natural elements, such as stone or wood.

Minimalist: Something is very calming and comforting about having a room that provides exactly what you need, and nothing more. Sleek lines and minimal furniture will make your room feel bigger, and employing a monochrome colour scheme can help encourage a feeling of everything being perfectly in order. Square

furniture, cubist patterns, and platform beds all make up a portion of this décor scheme.

Multi-Tasking: Today’s bedrooms don’t have to be just bedrooms; they can also offer a lovely seated reading areas, a sitting area for relaxing with your loved ones, or a computer desk. If you have a large bedroom, or a small living area, then consider adding a living area to your bedroom. Use throw rugs and different wall colors to define a separate area for your bedroom, or simply incorporate them into the overall scheme. For this type of bedroom to work you have to be able to “let it go” when you go to bed, otherwise you may find your sleep interrupted.

Mix and Match: Having a hard time settling on a scheme? No worries, one of this year’s trends is a mix and match approach. Take your favourite colours and textures, and then mix them all together. Round with square, textured with smooth, bright with dark. In the end you will be surrounded by all the things you adore, and your room will be a unique expression of your personality. Start at a thrift store, flea market, and pick up a few pieces you can work from.

Storage Solutions: Cluttered up with stuff? Make your room more habitable with some quality storage. Keep extra beds and sheets in rolling boxes under the bed, and turn the area over and around your headboard into a gorgeous bookcase. Woven baskets or hand-papered boxes can hold your odds and ends, and will give your room some texture and organization. Think of

how peaceful your room will be once everything is squared away neatly.

Eco-Friendly Trends

More and more decorating trends are leaning towards eco-friendly options. Whether using nature to inspire your room décor, or finding environmentally sustainable decorating options, being one with the planet has never been more fashionable. Here are a few ideas:

Nature-Inspired Décor: Several nature-inspired design elements can be used to make your bedroom stand out, while giving it a cohesive look and feel. Some ideas include the following:

- **Faux Bois (fake wood):** Items that look like wood, but aren't. They could be panels, lamps, furniture, or even fabrics.
- **Prints:** Floral and leafy prints are huge this year, whether in wallpaper or fabrics. If you don't want to make a permanent change, consider updating your duvet cover or adding some tropical-themed pillows and shams that can be easily changed out if they aren't your style.
- **Colours:** As previously mentioned, browns and greens are hot this year, but so are other nature-inspired colors like rose pinks and lavender purples. Choose two or three colours that work for you and weave them throughout your space.
- **Flowing Water:** Enhance the spa-like feeling of your bedroom with water. Whether with actual water (a small fountain) or water-inspired glass décor, you can now bring a touch of a sparkling sea or lake indoors.

Environmentally Friendly: The second aspect of the new eco-trend is using paint and décor that are environmentally-friendly, long-wearing, and recyclable. Consider the following aspects when you are changing your room:

- **Recycled/Repurposed:** Look for items that can be reused - like old wood that can be changed into a desk, bedding made from recycled cotton, and recycled paint. The more you reuse or repurpose items, the less strain you are putting on the planet.
- **Natural Ingredients:** Cotton and bamboo make for soft and natural sheets and blankets, and will naturally break down at the end of their life span. You can even find recycled wallpapers that use non-toxic inks.
- **Air Quality:** Improve your indoor quality and make your room healthier to sleep in by reducing dust and airborne particles. Also look for low-emission paints that will ensure your bedroom's air is as toxin free as possible.

Furniture: What's a new bedroom if you still have your same drab old furniture? Sometimes the only thing a room needs is the right type of furniture to fit your space. Here are a few ideas:

- **Modern and Sleek:** Consider black or dark woods that are slick and minimalist in design. Low-back chairs and low benches can add a convenient sitting area without taking up too much space.
- **Mix and Match:** Like the rest of your bedroom design trend, your furniture pieces do not have to match. Different styles, sizes, colours, and

textures give a room a well-loved appearance. However, it is recommended that the pieces remain in the same color family, particularly with wood pieces.

- **Fun Fabrics:** Ordinary furniture can be given a new lease on life by recovering with a new and fun fabric pattern. Keep the fabric in line with the rest of your colour scheme, or make it a signature piece with a bold statement.
- **Platforms:** For the ultimate in sleek and sophisticated, consider upgrading to a platform bed. Found in chocolate browns, marble whites and basic blacks, these beds are so understated that you can help but feel relaxed getting into one. Combine this with a minimalist approach, or jazz it up with some funky colours and fabrics.

Flooring

With bedroom flooring the eco-friendly trend continues with recycled wood floors, environmentally friendly carpets, and recycled fibre throw rugs. Colors for flooring are neutral, with the occasional splash in a throw rug to tie the room together. Bamboo floors and carpets are also quite popular, as they are quick to replenish themselves and are long lasting, so they are much better for the environment. Even if you are not ready to replace the flooring, you can always invest in a nice area rug to change the look of your room.

Lighting

Again the theme for bedrooms is to keep in natural, so open your blinds! Not only is natural

light trendy, it saves money and keeps your heating bills down. If natural lighting isn't possible, consider a range of lighting types; including focal lights over workspaces and to highlight artwork, with ambient lighting to set the mood. Add some decorative metal side-table lamps to complete the look. The key to good bedroom lighting is to ensure that you highlight all the positive aspects of your room – bed, seating area, art, etc. to put the room in a positive light.

More Ideas

The combinations you can create with the above suggestions are limitless – just use your imagination! However, if you need further inspiration consider looking back at our archives:

- Consider adding a daybed if you are single, or need a sitting/reading area. Here's one that was featured on TV's Cityline:
<http://www.nineclouds.ca/blog/miami-daybed-stars-on-city-tvs-cityline-nine-cloudsbeds-in-mississauga/>
- How about a feminine Chantilly headboard?
<http://www.nineclouds.ca/blog/new-chantilly-iron-headboard-available-in-latenovember/>
- Check out the trends for 2010, even if they aren't the "most current" trends you still find some great inspiration:
<http://www.nineclouds.ca/ColorTrends-2010.php>

- Get some more suggestions for decorating your bedroom:
<http://www.nineclouds.ca/blog/help-decorating-your-bedroom/>

Giving your bedroom a whole new look can be a big task, but in the end it will provide you with the sleeping and relaxing space you have always wanted.

Chapter 22: 2010 Trends for Interior Decorating



Consideration. Healing. Faith. Truth. The ringing in of the new 2010 decade creates new expectations and promises. This year's color trends will reflect a renewal of sorts, while adding fantasy and excitement. Each year, the interior design community looks for new colors to create optimism, allowing people to surround themselves with the things that make them feel good. Global infusion continues to influence combinations and patterns, bringing these renewed color palettes to the table.

Pantone, the leading expert on color influence for the design world, has proclaimed Turquoise as 2010's color of the year. "In many cultures, Turquoise occupies a very special position in the world of color," explains Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute®. "It is believed to be a protective talisman, a color of deep compassion and

healing, and a color of faith and truth, inspired by water and sky. Through years of color word-association studies, we also find that Turquoise represents an escape to many – taking them to a tropical paradise that is pleasant and inviting, even if only in a fantasy.”

Turquoise has been a staple in the interior designer’s palette for a number of years, taking on different tones and faces, but none have been this vivid. Complying with both warm and cool tones, turquoise will be found with a variety of color combinations.

2010 is predicted to be a year of renewal as well as a turning point. It is a new decade, following a tumultuous start to the millennium. The new face of interiors will follow this prediction, urging people to add more color and emphasize their personality, perhaps finding a new way to express themselves through design. Surroundings have become more important than ever to provide a stable environment, a place to enjoy friends and family, and a way to express individualism. The use of patterns and textures in home furnishings will enhance these surroundings through the use of vivid color.

Color trends can be grouped into several categories to further define their meanings. The following groups create a sense of style and direction for the latest trends.

Historical Roots

Robert Allen’s “Quintessence”: The infusion of patterns influenced by Native Americans and

Tribal Africans have found their niche in both traditional and modern decorating motifs. Ikats, batik-influenced patterns, with a side of animal skins are richly combined with leather, feathers, beads, and other natural materials. Other global nations will provide influence for this colorful trend, especially those with intricate patterns.

Rich, earthy brown tones juxtaposed with shades of turquoise provide a base for this color trend. Adding mustardy golds, earthened shades of red and slate influence hues to create a palette that is easy to live with. Geometric patterns offer a tribal feel are combined with luxurious textures of chenille, buttery leathers, or animal influenced patterns. The shapes are inspired from historical textiles, weavings, rugs, and paintings.

A traditional look would layer all of these options, and add unexpected elements of trims, pleats, or the occasional wood bead. Furnishing trends would further enhance the look by combining distressed wood finishes with painted accents. The use of metal for table bases, lighting, or other accent pieces becomes very important to pulling this varied look together. Geometric patterned rugs put the entire sequence in place, creating a warm and inviting look.

A more modern approach will pare down the layers of pattern for texture on furnishings, while playing up shapes in art or floor coverings. Native American or African masks can be a focal point on a wall, while allowing the shape of furnishings to direct the room.

This global inspired palette is also lifted directly from current fashion trends influencing 2010. The unbridled geometric shapes are pleasing to the eye and create harmony without being too stiff. This trend is one that should be given careful consideration, as a little will go a long way. Someone decorating with this trend in mind should steer clear of becoming too “theme-oriented”, and keep the overall look more restrained.

Spring Sizzle

Turquoise wouldn't be turquoise without the exuberance of bright and lively colors surrounding it. Shades of bright pink, coral, purple, grass green, and sunshine yellow create a bold trend in fearless decorating.

The excitement displayed by this palette is a delight to the senses. Coral tones will be an important color for 2010. This universally flattering hue is showing up in energizing combinations, particularly with shades of turquoise and soft whites. A room painted coral will enhance a person's natural color, giving them a healthier glow and happier aura. Expect to see this color in nature or floral inspired prints, along with the continued use of strong two-toned geometrics.

For those wanting a more sophisticated version of this color trend, the pops of neon are softened with shades of brown or gray to take the edge off. This allows the room to keep a timeless base with accents of color that are easy to change. Picture the high contrast of a lemon yellow with varying shades of taupe. The effect is an old Hollywood

glamour being updated to today's standards. Taupe and yellow sophistication

European Artifacts

Distressed finishes, patinas, and lighter finishes are all part of a new trend circulating from the Old World. This trend uses color in a mellowed or weathered palette, evoking an antique or passed down tradition. Softer tones of yellow, turquoise, pale pink or purples, gray-tinged blues, and subtle browns tell a story of travel, worn elegance as well as ease.

Finishes appear to have layers of paint scraped off, adding additional texture to the furnishings. Distressing of wood stains and even fabrics give a flea-market feel to the overall look. Linen velvets, intentionally rumpled prints, and softly lit silks are combined with worn woods and metals, creating a casual appearance. This trend capitalizes on the imperfect, allowing you to mix pattern and color more freely. The overall look is one that is soft and comforting, and works well with a collective group of items, rather than showcasing one item in a room.

This casual elegance will embrace the green movement more for some, encouraging us to look to the resale or antique shops for a “not-so-new” looking treasure. Recovering vintage frames to update them will continue to be popular, and fit well into this trend.

Overscaled florals, varying sizes of stripes, soft tonal damasks, and textural solid fabrics will define this 2010 trend. An eclectic mix of woods

and metals will pull the look together in a room, grounded by a richly patterned rug. The softer tones give a calming effect on the room.

Calm and Collected

The past few years have focused on the Zen effect. Today's expectation is that we have found it, and we need to maintain it. The soft palettes of neutral from the previous trends are moving to a quieter, sophisticated grouping of grays. This trend focuses on a more tailored and timeless aesthetic, emphasizing soft touches of color. Accessorizing with creamy yellow hues or watery blue-greens bring in much needed personality. Heathered shades of purple will also be popular.

This trend will not focus on the furnishings in a room. It is there to provide a soothing backdrop, perhaps one that is punctuated by a collection of artwork. It also allows the versatility to change accent pieces and accessories when more color is desired.

The Asian influence in decorating style is still a strong part of this trend, with furnishings being clean and simple in style. Translucent sheers, squared off arms, no distressing, and darker finishes are hallmarks of this trend. Silhouettes tend to be long and lean, with a sexy, low slung look. Expect to see soft metallic finishes on both furniture and in fabrics.

Summarizing the 2010 Trends for Interior Decorating

Brown will continue to dominate as a go-to color in decorating, being followed closely by shades

of gray or taupe. "In the last year, people were looking to be calmed and comforted by interiors," states designer Melanie Coddington, recently named as one of House Beautiful's 20 interior designers to watch. "I hope the burgeoning sense of optimism will translate into sparkle, glamour, and lots of risk taking in design. In with color!" Coddington also agrees that the "purple moment" that came on strong in 2009 will factor heavily into this year's trends. She loves that it works so well with the gray and brown base tones.

While paint is being used more often, wallpaper still continues to fight for its rightful place. Last year it made a large comeback, and is poised to be even more popular in 2010. Textures such as grass cloth are easy to incorporate into any interior, and are nice to hide imperfections in the wall. Textural vinyls add depth to the perimeter, and will be the more popular wallpaper trend to go-to. Natural materials such as cork, linen, sand, crushed marble, and other stones are creating an exceptional statement. This addition of texture provides another layer to the finished look of a room.

In addition to all the rich and bold colors for 2010, the overall look for interior design is optimistic. More sparkle is being added to rooms, whether it is a metallic thread running throughout a fabric, to bejeweled accessories or lighting. Gold and bronze are just as prevalent as silver, but the trend seems to be leaning to the warmer tones. The use of metallic finishes in unusual places will continue, including leathers, mercurial glass on tables, and woven into fringes

or cording. Wallpapers are also adding bling by giving the option of adding glued-on jewels or beaded accents. Shiny metallic finishes inspired by nature will be a very popular choice.

Art-inspired glass pieces will be a favorite trend for accessorizing. Colorful, mouth-blown glass will be found everywhere, from centerpieces to lamp bases. Because of its unique properties, each piece will be different, adding a custom element. The light reflecting qualities provide another way to add brightness to a room without being too intense. Crystals will be found more on chandeliers, creating a more decadent and luxurious style.

Accent pieces will take on a more jewelry-like feel, with the use of beading. Window treatments will also incorporate beading into tiebacks and trims to add a taste of overall glamour. In addition to beading, accents will take a page from fashion by adding accoutrements of belts, crystals, sequins, and 3-D floral embellishments. Belts for interior design? Watch for them to nip in pillows, table skirting, or even serve as a finishing touch on a table.

Dressmaker details will also be more prevalent, with ruching, shirring, and pleating. Watch for these finishing touches in window treatments, bedding, pillows, and skirting. Upholstered items will also feature these extra touches for a more custom look.

Geometric shapes will reign heavily, not only in textiles, but on furnishings. Mirrors, lighting,

and side tables will feature more curves, and fit in well with today's sleeker lines. The curvature adds a softer touch, giving the eye something easier to land on. The idea is to mix geometric shapes with the straighter lines to add interest and proportion to a room. Curvy profiles will show up in nearly every room, and add a bit of whimsy. Expect to see more unusual scales of furnishings that incorporate this trend through exaggerated lines.

Organic shapes influenced by nature will be finding a home in 2010's interior decorating trends. As designers experiment with more futuristic shapes, expect to see those taking note from items under the sea. The translucent effect of jellyfish may find its way into a light fixture. The movement of water provides inspiration for patterns in textiles, glassware, or other forms of lighting.

Other natural motifs that will continue to be popular are branches or shapes of leaves. The rough look of bark provides a wonderful texture on metal tables. The refined line of a ginkgo leaf is a calming shape in both modern and traditional settings. More involved floral prints are making a comeback, adding life and movement to a room filled with solid textural furnishings.

The Greek key motif made resurgence in 2009, and will more popular than ever for 2010. This classic motif will be found in edging or trimming on upholstery skirts, draperies, or anywhere else it can be creatively placed. Its strong geometric

shape provides a nice finishing touch to both modern and traditional styles.

A revival of vintage shapes in furnishings will also be popular in 2010. This trend will revive an Art-Deco chair or a Victorian settee by painting it a glossy color, such as navy or apple green, and then upholstering the seat in an unexpected fabric. The outcome is sometimes outrageous, sometimes sexy, and adds moxie to any space. This trend is especially important because it does make a statement about living more responsibly. Keeping older items out of the landfill by recovering, refinishing or repairing will be more popular than ever, especially during this time of recession.

The mixing of vintage pieces with modern is a trendy look that continues to be perfected as interior designers become more comfortable with it. Being able to mix sometimes dainty proportions with today's clean lines takes a practiced eye, but the results are magnificent when done well. It is much more personal and interesting to mix older pieces in with the new ones, creating an unexpected visual feast. "Find the one piece that speaks volumes about your personality to be your room's conversation maker," recommends designer Jordan Farnsmith from Indiana. "Perhaps it is a ridiculous coat rack that your grandmother had in her entry - paint it a glossy shade of your favorite color and put it in a place that gets noticed. These are the things that individualize your home." Putting a twist on classic shapes will be a common theme in 2010 decorating.

Becoming More Green

Using sustainable or green products is not really as much of a trend anymore as it has become a way of life. However, in the interior design community, the products continue to improve immensely, making it easier than ever to find them. The new green fabrics have a softer hand, better depth of color, and more choices than ever. Prices continue to come down on these products as manufacturing processes are perfected.

Furniture companies are striving to retain luxury while incorporating more sustainable materials. Lee Industries, a leader in the eco-friendly furnishings field, prides itself on using soy-based cushion materials and wood from Certified Sustainable Forests. "The consumer is much savvier and wants to be more environmentally responsible. We are committed to providing a luxurious, custom seat that our customers will keep and recover for years to come," states Norman Coley, Lee Industries president.

Resale and consignment shops are seeing resurgence in sales with the interest in recycling as well as with the stale economy. Consumers are learning more do-it-yourself tips, and are looking for materials made from recycled product. Repurposed items that are found at estate or garage sales are finding new life by being painted or creatively rejuvenated. Sites such as 1stDibs.com show wonderful vintage items and provide plenty of inspiration.

In addition to reusing items, today's trendsetters are more apt to make some of their own home

interior accents. A revival of sewing, woodworking, and home craft making will be strong in 2010, with people spending more time at home.

Natural materials will continue their dominance in counter surface, and will include more use of quartz or cement. Cement, while expensive to install, can now be dyed numerous colors, and given various levels of finish for durability. It is being specified more and more for countertops and flooring, and is easy to maintain. The same is true for quartz based materials – their natural anti-bacterial quality makes this product a favorite for kitchens and bathrooms.

The Size of Things to Come

As with a shrinking economy, one of the biggest trends in interior decorating is the downsizing of homes. Decorating has adapted to people moving into loft apartments or smaller dwelling of 1500 square feet and under. For some it was a necessity, for others it was the idea of living with less. Regardless, the interior design world has had to create smaller scaled furnishings to fit these spaces, as well as provide double duty for functionality.

“In the last couple of years I have decided that I don’t need all the extras,” says Jillian Granger, 44, a new resident of the Paul Brown Lofts in St. Louis, MO. “My family travels a lot and the idea of not having to maintain a large residence became very appealing. Living in a smaller space taught me to decide which things I really need.”

Family rooms double as guest bedrooms if the sofa will pull out into a bed. Console tables are used as desks, and drawers are built into spaces under bed to be used for extra storage. A kitchen island has a new feature – it could have hidden pull out legs that convert it to a dining table-like piece to seat ten.

Decorating trends for smaller spaces will focus on smaller proportions. Occupants will still focus on using luxury materials such as marble, granite, and exotic wood floors, but the emphasis will come in little details. The kitchen backsplash may include a unique metal or glass tile to reflect light as well as provide an intricate detail. Lighting will be recessed in order to not take up visual space.

Technology will also play a major role, with areas devoted to laptops, phones, music, and other communication or gaming devices. Designing rooms to accommodate these things will be an important factor in layout and flow.

The new decade’s trends for interior decorating will provide hope and optimism for what is to come. Keeping continuous harmony throughout the home is still the key to good style, and using the trends in ways that personalize the space will be crucial. It is important to not be too caught up in what is the latest and greatest idea, but rather utilizing a few of the new ideas to update the space. You are only limited by your own creative style. If you do only one thing in 2010, please add a touch color to your surroundings.

Chapter 23: 2009 Design Trends: The Hottest New Color Combinations in Home Decor



Summary - Design Trends 2009

Environmental awareness continues to make a splash in home décor for 2009. It was last year's hottest trend, and while the focus has shifted a bit, natural living and ecological friendliness dominate the color palette for 2009. A variety of greens, browns and blues are everywhere. They are set off with rich accents of black, luscious reds, deep purples, earthy oranges and warm metallics like gold, copper and bronze.

Natural materials help to bring the feel of the outdoors into your home in a warm, comforting way. Stone accents, wood in natural finishes that show off the grain or even left rough-hewn, unbleached and un-dyed textiles and

foliage are giving rooms the feeling of the great outdoors without losing the inviting warmth of the snug indoors.

Another popular way to add depth and interest this year is the use of metals. Shiny silvers are not what are called for right now; instead we are seeing more warmth and texture in the metal choices available. Brushed bronze, matte gold and hammered copper can add just the right touch to nearly any room in your home.

Last year's Asian and Moroccan touches are still in fashion, but even hotter are the patterns of Eastern Europe and Russia. The bold colors and intricate designs of Suzani patterns and Uzbek folk art add warmth and depth to any room. The deep reds, purples, oranges and yellows that were so popular in 2008 still harmonize well with the updated ethnic influences of 2009.

Purple was definitely the belle of 2008's color ball, and the shades on the deeper end of the purple spectrum will still look just as up to date this year. Eggplant and plum bring a richness that is unparalleled to your environment. You can use purple nearly anywhere! Whether it is a splash of deep violet in the napkins on your dining room table or soft plush pillows in a beautiful amethyst on your sofa, purple can be just a bit less formal without being overtly casual.

Whatever 2009 will bring, it is neither the year of soft pastels nor is it the year of neutral monochromatic palettes. You can not afford to be afraid of color. Everything from walls and

furnishings to decorative pieces and small accents can be used to bring color into your home. Deep earth inspired tones of browns, greens and blues meet the jewel tones of ruby, emerald and sapphire and the food inspired bright colors of mango, apple red, lime green, lemon yellow and pumpkin orange. Black accents also do their part to really give all of the colors some contrast and pop.

Ecologically friendly, warm and simple – the trends of 2009 reflect the desire of many people to get back to the basics while feeling comfortable and safe in their homes. Your home is your refuge from the day-to-day struggle in the urban rat race, and how you furnish it can make it even more comfortable and comforting. Many of the earth elements of design that started making their way onto the home decorating scene the past few years are stepping into the spotlight this year. Whether you anticipate a year full of family gatherings or have a lifestyle that requires a cozy nest for two, using natural flooring, recycled materials, unbleached fabrics and colors straight from Mother Nature can help you make your home both welcoming and fashionable.

Overview

For the hottest in home design for 2009, you can expect a continuation of last year's trend toward earth consciousness, using the rich tones of nature along with the textures of the outdoors. "Natural" does not need to equate to dull and drab, however. Not at all! The vivid colors of the sky, the sea and the bounties of the earth can provide you with a rich and varied palette.

Rich warm oranges and red are reminiscent of sunrises and sunsets, and can add a fiery glow to any room. The bright radiance of the summer sun shines through in deep yellow golds that can build some comfort in to your gathering spots or intimate spaces. The vibrant greens and browns of the forest bring depth to your home that makes it seem even more inviting and comfortable.

If you love color, there is simply no reason to feel like you need to limit yourself to neutral tones in your home. The year 2009 is definitely the year to make your spaces entirely your own. Fill your house with hues you love; do not shy away from bold colors, even on walls and large expanses like sofas and bedding. This is where you spend the majority of your nonworking hours, and the current trend says that it should be a direct reflection of your own personal style.

Debbie Zimmer, a paint and color expert from the Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute (PQI) has this to say about the color and design trends for 2009: “Key drivers for 2009 color choices include aspirations that create a comfortable and tranquil home environment coupled with a return to authentic and sustainable materials. In contrast, lively color use and bold patterns will find their place as an alternative to more sedate living areas.”

Natural textures are finding their way into more and more homes. Whether it is a jute rug, stone wall or wood furniture that lets the inherent beauty of the wood grain pattern take center stage, adding these touches help you bring the

wonder of the outdoor world right into your dining room, den or bedroom.

Adding hints of purple, or even more if you are one of the many who love the richness it can bring, can really bring the style of your room into the New Year. Bold shades of purple are a classy, understated way to put a touch of color into a room while still maintaining a darker, slightly somber tone. Purple can replace black, dark brown, steel grey or navy blue to punch up the style while still keeping the feel of your room.

Exotic prints, bold colors and ethnic accents allow you to express your individuality in new and different ways. Embroidered fabrics can bring an extra dimension of richness and texture to any surface. Whether you use them for upholstering your furniture, draping your table or covering your bed, they are sure to give a little boost to the look of your room. Deep shades of red, rich gold, vibrant greens and jewel tones abound in the fabrics and fashions of Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa. Bring some exotic spice right into your home by using accents from other diverse cultures, and you will be at the height of fashion for 2009.

It Is Easy Being Green

Though typically thought of as a “cool” color, there is no color hotter than green for 2009. Environmental issues continue to gain importance, and as more people begin to evince Earth friendly attitudes, every shade of green is enjoying renewed popularity. From sage to lime and emerald to olive, there is a green for any look

and feel you can imagine. It can be a sedate, nearly neutral part of your color scheme, or it can be the vibrant punch that brings a room to life.

Nature inspired neutrals like wheat, sand, hazelnut and espresso all go beautifully with the many shades of green that are all over this year's design choices. The variety of greens and browns can create the background of your inviting, comfortable home, with touches of the outdoors that complement the color scheme completing your earthy, ecologically friendly look.

Brown and green are far from the only colors of nature that you can bring indoors, though. In nearly any hue, there are shades straight from Mother Nature's paintbrush. There are the reds and pinks found in sunsets, the soils of the southwest deserts, and flowers such as azaleas, roses and cherry blossoms. The full spectrum of intensity can be found in these colors in nature, from the brilliant deep tones of a fall maple leaf to the soft, creamy, pale, nearly white petals of a magnolia.

The natural harmony of the earth, and the deep red orange of bittersweet berries not only lend a startling dash of color to the winter landscape, but can also do the same in your living room.

Other shades can reflect our natural surroundings just as well, like stone tones, all shades of whites, and sunrise colors, including pinks, oranges, and yellows. The changing skies can also provide inspiration to use sunset colors or rich sky-hues, as opposed to the botanical colors one might have

expected to be popular in recent years. Water is mimicked with aqua, turquoise and clear blues, meant to evoke the soft and flowing purity of Earth's most crucial element. Earth tones can also be used indoors. These shades work especially well in kitchens, bathrooms and family spaces.

As far as natural materials to enhance the home, there aren't many choices more eco-friendly and practical as bamboo for flooring or accents. Natural wood, soft leather, and undyed weaves can also bring a touch of nature indoors.

You can also expect textured painting to remain a favorite, as marbling produces a natural appearance, and natural flooring materials become more popular for less-traditional surfaces. Slate, stone, cork, bamboo, granite, and marble are all recommended, with wide-plank hardwood floors that have been hand-scraped or weathered.

Other natural materials in use for home décor are reclaimed wood, organic fibers, recycled plastics, raffia, heavy wools, and organic cottons.

Global Trends

One of the industry's greatest sources of inspiration comes from the Maison et Objet, the bi-annual home furnishings trade show of greater Paris. This year's show featured 3,000 exhibitors, and the trend seemed to be headed toward a back-to-the basics, eco-conscious style that focuses on quality craftsmanship instead of just posh comfort.

For palette preferences, look at purples, brilliant golds and luxurious reds. Handmade objects draw the focus away from luxury and the high-speed lifestyle and back to a “better living” trend.

Patty Bouley, renowned trend spotter, revealed her picks for best palettes of 2009. They include bold patterns borrowed from rural Russia and Uzbek folk art as well as the frosty finishes, metallic accents, and cube shapes featured in a theme that mimics snowflakes and ice.

The plum and gold tones that were prominent in last year’s palette become more powerful as a pair, backed by deep purple, rosy lavenders and mustard yellows with a touch of green. Quilts and wicker furniture push traditional boundaries, while reds and oranges make a splash in the form of crimson and citrus.

Using Ethnic Flavor

Besides the former Soviet Union, Suzani patterns and Uzbek folk art offer striking patterns and inspiration for 2009. You can find ethnic design in accent pieces like pillows, lamps, and picture frames to add a dash of culture to your interior.

Moroccan flavor adds deep red and glowing oranges with hand-crafted leather, blown glass, and perforated metal work. Visions of Latin America invoke golden yellows, turquoise, and dusty rose with rich textiles. India brings a fruit bowl of color to the table with its vibrant yellows and festive greens.

Comfort and Function

This year, comfort meets function as practical, sensible home décor options top the charts. Colorful rooms of relaxing, warm furniture pass up elegance and luxury for the newest trends in interior design. Look into seasonal hues, such as cranberry red, pumpkin orange, and warm brown to recall a simpler time and an easy, peaceful agrarian lifestyle. Make your home seem even warmer with knitted or crocheted afghans, rugs and blankets. Neutral colors again make an appearance in this theme, as earthy browns or deep plums complement rose or bronze to warm and calm a space. Offset bold colored accessories, wall coverings with neutral-colored upholstery patterns. Décor objects that carry the natural themes, such as rock, stone, and soil are also prominent.

A New Look for Neutrals

Neutrals get a bad rap for being noncommittal, but this year, shades of green and deep brown continue the natural trend, using the interplay between light and shadow to deliver simplicity in a world where over-indulgence is the norm. Beige reminds us of sand and rattan colors can be used as neutral shades that remind us of nature’s raw materials. Shadow blues and grays hint at color while providing the classic fresh palette characteristics of neutral tones.

Favorite neutrals are still in for 2009, including the beiges, browns, taupes, and tans that reflect earth elements, like rock, soil and stone.

Borrow the shades of peace and tranquility from plants like sage, palm, and fern, and combine with rich dark woods and leather. Bring the room together with natural hardwood flooring and splashes of color in accent pieces. Neutral doesn't have to mean bland – consider grey-blues, whisper pink, and soft coral as part of your new look this year.

Liven Up Your Home With Metallics

Chrome and stainless steel top the list of favored metallics, while 2009 also favors gray-toned metals like silver, pewter, charcoal, platinum, steel, aluminum and brushed nickel, and other shades that are inspired from the earth, like bronze and copper.

Metals are dynamic, since they can represent an urban flare in a space, ethnicity when used in sculpture or other accent designs, and nature in their textured, non-polished form.

Feng Shui for the Home

Feng Shui, the ancient Chinese art of placement, literally translates to “wind and water.” It is yet another in the earth-conscious decorating trends popular in 2009, bringing both ethnic influences and an awareness of the environment into the home. The goal is to create an environment that fosters health, happiness, and wealth. On its most basic level, the art of Feng Shui is based on the premise that surroundings affect life's circumstances.

Earth elements that comprise Feng Shui – earth, fire, wood, metal, and water – reflect the same elements seen in other design trends this year. Feng Shui takes those elements in a room and balances them to enhance the flow of chi, or life energy, within the room.

Colors connected with Feng Shui are also those designed to increase peace and calmness, such as terra cotta, peach, tan, cocoa, coral, and cream. Soft pastels such as lavenders, light blues, and greens all fall in line with the colors that are hot in 2009. The use of these colors creates a tranquil, quiet atmosphere. The brighter and bolder colors of the spectrum, such as reds and oranges, are considered stimulating and should be used very sparingly with Feng Shui.

Design elements in Feng Shui call for soft lines and curvilinear shapes. Avoid hard corners, which are thought to cause negative energy; if you do have strong corners, drape a cascading linen over the piece to soften it.

In the bedroom, colors used to create an intimate atmosphere include pink, subtle red, burgundy, magenta, eggplant, or pomegranate.

Art and other decorative objects in Feng Shui should represent things one wants to see manifested in life. Mirrors should not be used as decorative items, as they are thought to interfere with rest and bounce too much energy around. The area should have access to plenty of natural light during the daytime, and offer complete darkness for sleep.

Other popular design elements that are not only part of 2008 decorating trends, but also fit nicely into Feng Shui, include pure cotton linens, luxe cashmere, or soft silks. A mixture of textures not only adds interest to the room, but it reflects yet another element of today's design trends.

Wood – one of the key components of this year's design trends – is another important addition with Feng Shui and represents strength, intuition, growth, and flexibility. Too much wood can be viewed as inflexible, though, leading to a lack of creativity and depression.

Flowers – either fresh or silk, natural fabrics and cotton, plants, and trees finish off a Feng Shui room with today's design elements seamlessly integrated into the look and provide the softness and gentleness sought through Feng Shui décor.

Urban Meets Agrarian

Doty Horn, Director of Color and Design at Benjamin Moore, analyzes all of the current shifts in trends from fashion to pop culture to world events to bring us the hottest design elements for 2009. Horn lists “raw” palette colors for 2009 interior fashion, like unfinished wood, cinder blocks and resourceful, if unexpected, materials inside the home that showcase shades of white, sand and gray.

Horn also predicts a contrast between city life and closer-to-nature agrarian living. This shift is echoed in urban construction, as rooftop gardens and natural design elements make their way into the city. According to Horn, look for gray tones

of urban living to mingle with green, rust, terra cotta, and other warm, organic shades.

Get Your New Look Ready for 2009

Staying with the existing trend toward environmental awareness, current furnishings and major design elements can be recycled and reused by simply updating your home décor instead of replacing it. Repurpose furnishings from recycled wood or plastic, or rescue great finds at estate and garage sales. For bonus points, find pieces that can be used in more than one way, like a bench that offers storage space. A fashionable home in 2009 is also highly functional.

Use your imagination to incorporate any items that reflect nature, including stone, granite, and marble. Tie these elements in with colorful shades to create a warm and inviting space. Even a few well-placed antiques or bold accent pieces can refresh the look of your home without a major overhaul. You can look for these patterns to be echoed across business spaces, as hotels and offices incorporate the looks of 2009.

Chapter 24: 2008 Design Trends: The Year's Hottest Styles in Home Fashion and Decor



Summary — Design Trends

Environmental awareness has made its way into the home and appears to be the hottest trend. Colors reflective of nature, such as varying shades of green, are being used as a base to create an earth-conscious ambiance.

Natural elements are added to bring a bit of nature indoors, including rough-hewn woods, metals, stones, and unbleached or undyed textiles. These can be seen in flooring made from natural materials such as bamboo, wide wood planks, stone, marble, or granite. Bamboo plants or other natural foliage are popular, as are chunky weaves and natural fabrics.

Metal is also highly popular, and the more traditional chromes and stainless steel have been warmed up with the addition of brushed nickel or aluminum, bronze, copper, and nickel. Hammered metals add an ethnic flare to home design, which ushers in yet another popular trend this year.

Multicultural influences abound, highlighted by the Beijing Olympics this summer. Reds, oranges, jades, and yellows are a canvas for floral designs, origami folds, and silky fabrics associated with the Asian influence. Moroccan styling is also highly popular, with the deep reds and purples and multi-textured décor bringing culture into home design.

Hollywood glamour reminiscent of the 1930s and 1940s has come back en vogue, but toned down to maintain a sense of comfort and warmth. Luxe decorating pieces, such as crystal chandeliers or lamps, are used sparingly, combined with comfortable furnishings and subdued colors. No longer should glamorous surroundings be considered ultra-formal, stuffy, or uncomfortable. Opulence has gained a bit of humility.

Once considered moody and dark, purple has stormed as one of the hot design colors of the year. It began its run in fashion, which quickly carried over into the home. Lighter shades of iris and lavender are used in place of traditional neutrals to add softness and warmth to modern spaces. Deep purple, eggplant, and aubergine create a sultry, exotic environment for living spaces.

Color has made a splash, and almost every hue of the rainbow is included. Rich jewel tones such as deep reds, bright oranges, warm yellows, and turquoise have gained popularity. The only limitation is the imagination, as these colors are used for everything from eye-popping backdrops to room brightening accent pieces.

Black and white continues to remain popular, with lots of textured textiles to help soften the look. Bits of color such as red or pink are added to give a touch of surprise and energy, as well as to create the illusion of a larger space. Subdued animal prints are being combined with glass and metal against the black and white backdrop.

There has been a movement in home design to reflect a return to family roots, almost as if longing for a slower pace. As a respite from the hectic nature of everyday life, home design has included crewel colors that remind us of colorful needlepoint, homemade cooking, and warm family memories. Pumpkin colors, browns, burgundies, deep reds, and forest greens create an inviting atmosphere that encourages gatherings with family and friends. Second hand antiques and other comfortable furnishings complete the look.

In every popular design trend, elements of the earth are included. Whether it is the use of recycled materials, natural flooring, undyed materials, or rough woods, the theme this year that carries through every popular trend is the prominence of nature moving from the outdoors into the home. The increased awareness of environmental

issues makes this trend one we are likely to see continued well into the future.

Overview

The design trends have gone eco-friendly, incorporating natural textures with rich, earthy colors to reflect a renewed environmental consciousness. No longer are earth tones bland and boring. The vivid new style for environmentally aware décor incorporates greens, clear blues, soft pinks, and rich sunset colors.

The varying tones of the earth as the sun passes overhead, marking various points in the day, are reflected in the home through fusions of colors, taking a room from the brisk softness of dawn through the bright warmth of afternoon and into the sultry glow of sunset.

Personal style will largely guide color choices for home decorating this year; look for bolder backdrops as homeowners become more accustomed to creating a living environment rather than just a look. “Consumer’s increasing color confidence and personal style make any color fashionable,” says Debbie Zimmer, a paint and color expert with The Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute.ⁱ

Accent pieces that reflect relationships with the earth blend well with the backdrop of fern, sage, or golden yellow. Rough, natural woods, bamboo, stones, cotton and jute combine with natural, undyed materials in tones of ecru, sand, and adobe to bring the outdoors inside and reflect a newfound harmony with nature.

Sophistication has gone subtle with clear blues and aqua’s accented with crystal chandeliers and glass accents. The key to elegance this year is understated refinement, adding whispers of luxury and elegance to soft hues that conjure images of cool water and warm beaches.

Purple has taken its place this year as a bold statement of sophistication. Combined with tones of silver and grey, the boldness of plums and purples contrast to the understated pastels of last year.

Home décor has taken a turn for the exotic, with the Olympics in China bringing out rich shades of jade, bold reds, and warm oranges and yellows. The trend is to include touches of ethnic color, surprisingly combined with rich chocolate browns as neutrals. Dress these bold looks up with handcrafted accent pieces from Japan, Morocco, and Asia.

Black and white brings a modern look into the year, but punched up with bold reds or surprisingly subtle pinks and lavenders. Brushed metals remain popular, but softer tones of copper and bronze will outshine chrome and stainless steel.

Furniture ranges from see-through structures of molded plastics, cantilevered seating, and high tech metals to oversized lamps, chandeliers, mirrors, and other decorative accessories.

Going “Green” With Home Décor

The trend is recognition of Earth consciousness, and concern for environmental issues is reflected in this year’s home decorating choices. The colors of the outdoors have been brought inside to create surroundings that mimic and blend with nature.

Green is the new “neutral,” in shades of fern, pine, sage, and palm. These colors are used as a backdrop to create rooms that are warm and inviting with an earthy, eco-friendly feel. More traditional neutrals such as sand, tan, warm brown, and beige become accent colors to complete the look.

In recognition that nature is more than greens, browns, and neutrals, other shades that reflect our natural surroundings are reflected in home décor as well. Stone tones, vivid sunrise colors such as pinks, oranges, and yellows, and all shades of white are being combined to create a color palette as varied and unique as the world around us.

Aqua, turquoise, and clear blues bring the element of water indoors. The colors are soft and flowing, reflective of the sky and the purity of Earth’s most important element.

The warmth and softness of earth tones makes them suitable for use in any room, but they are particularly well suited for kitchens, bathrooms, and family living spaces.

Bamboo appears in the home as a choice for eco-friendly flooring, or as a popular accent item. Fresh bamboo plants can dress up a windowsill or a corner of your living space, reflecting yet another element of nature inside the home.

Natural wood, soft leather, and undyed, unbleached chunky weaves complete with imperfections finish off the natural look. Designs at the biannual Paris-based tradeshow, Maison & Objet, included floral patterns on all types of fabrics accented with bronze, platinum, and gold.ⁱⁱ

Other earth-friendly design elements popular in this realm of home décor include reclaimed wood, organic fibers, recycled plastics, raffia, heavy wools, and organic cottons.

Textured painting that resembles marbling gives walls a more natural appearance, and natural flooring materials are making their way out of bathrooms and kitchens and into the rest of the home. These include slate, stone, cork, bamboo, granite, and marble. Hardwood floors are leaning towards wider planks with a hand-scraped or weathered look.

All of nature’s colors are fashionable this year, and there is no doubt the natural look has gone from dowdy to downright tantalizing.

Asian Influence

As China hosts the Olympics this year, designers expect to see warm colors in surprising combinations, such as rich reds blended with coppers, burnished oranges, and browns.ⁱⁱⁱ Vibrant

colors such as magenta, pumpkin orange, peacock blue, turquoise, and royal blues will find use both as highlight colors and as bold backdrops.

The Asian influence will also highlight jades, yellows, and reds against backdrops of nature inspired natural hues, making these vivid colors really pop.

Painted stripes of the same shade, but in different sheens, add a burst of life to a neutral wall. Global textiles, including satins and silks, are being added to natural cottons, which not only giving an ethnic feel to a room, but the depth of various textures fits right in with this year's decorating trends.

Neutral colored flooring, such as natural stone, provides the perfect complement to the jewel tones found in Asian inspired design, and stripes and florals make an appearance in furnishing textiles. Red or orange accent pillows can be used to punch up more neutral-colored furnishings.

Plants, water, and stones are the three primary components of Asian design, continuing the theme of incorporating nature into this year's top decorating trends.

Smooth stones in a clear, glass vase, or used around the base of decorative plants or candles, brings nature indoors. Painted inspirational words on a few stones highlighted against a black background is another way to add harmony and natural elements.

Water is an important element in Asian design, and the addition of a small fountain to a room creates a sense of tranquility. Indoor waterfalls should have an appealing sound as well as a beautiful cascade.

Plants add a touch of nature to the home, and bamboo and bonsai plants add a quintessential Asian flair. Bonsai are beautiful, but require special care and are best left for those with a green thumb, while bamboo is a relatively easy and carefree way to incorporate a bit of nature into living spaces.

Rice paper lamps and room dividers help pull together your other design elements to complete the look, and can be painted with beautiful floral designs.

Black and White Opulence

The black and white combination is expected to gain popularity, creating a modern look that will highlight the high-tech finishes of furniture and accessories. This year, black and white has become the backdrop for glamorous living spaces, such as living rooms and bedrooms.

Add subdued animal prints, such as cheetah or zebra, glass, polished metals, and high sheen finishes, as well as contrasting textures to really create an air of opulence. Punch up the look with splashes of bold color such as rich red, or soften the look by adding brush strokes of taupe, soft pink, or deep lavender. The hints of color freshen up the black and white look and keep it up to date. The addition of splashes of color in a black

and white room not only adds an element of surprise, but pulls the room back and opens it up to make it appear larger.

Floating objects add a contemporary flair, such as plinth base furniture and cantilever chairs. They add an airiness that allows you to see through the furniture while maintaining an ultra-modern look. Floating objects such as sphere lamps hung at varying heights and furnishings made from recycled metals and plastics continue the theme.

Black and white is a great way to highlight natural design elements such as stone, or to incorporate silk wallpapers and sleek metals. In order to get the most out of black and white design, care should be taken to incorporate a variety of textures.

The hot metals of the season look great against a backdrop of black and white and incorporate the appeal of natural elements. Brushed metals have eclipsed chrome and stainless in popularity this year, but all types of metals remain a hot decorating trend.

Purple's New Sophistication

One of the hottest new looks this year is the presence of purple intermingled with metallic accents. In contrast to the pastels that normally rule springtime, purple gives the season a sultry tone, yet maintains an air of elegance. Out of style for quite some time, purple highlighted with grey remind us of a bygone era and have come back into popularity with force.

Once thought of as a popular color for little girls and teenagers, purple has grown up and is being used to transform a variety of adult spaces, including kitchens, bedrooms, and living rooms.

The focus on ethnic diversity and the acceptance of multicultural influences has help propel purple to renewed popularity in all of its hues. Even though purple is almost never used in Asian interiors, today's trend of blending the unexpected allows purple to be used as a dramatic pairing to highlight Asian-styled furnishings. The combination of rich purples and warm browns creates a space that is inviting and comfortable.

Purple can evoke a number of images and feelings, from Old World charm reminiscent of royalty, to sultry and sexy, to fresh and youthful.

Unusual combinations, such as orchid and lilac, will be seen matched up with yellows, golds, and greens, continuing the theme of Earth awareness while maintaining a certain amount of elegance. As the year progresses, purple becomes increasingly popular. Lavender, iris, and heather colored walls serve as a backdrop to highlight plum, eggplant, or aubergine furnishings accented with silver or grey.

A pale shade of lavender paired with grey concrete or stone flooring adds sophistication and warmth to modern kitchens. It softens a look filled with stainless steel appliances and countertops, bringing the industrial look into the home, while keeping it friendly and appealing.

The metals of the season can be showcased against a backdrop of purple and grey, including silver, brushed nickel, pewter, platinum, steel, and aluminum. With the popularity of so many metallic finishes, the richness of purple adds depth and warmth as well as sophistication.

Purples are making an increasingly more prevalent showing in home decorating media, including the latest edition of *Elle Décor* and fashion press releases. The Pantone Color Institute has even chosen a shade of purple called Blue Iris as the Color of the Year.^{iv}

The Ethnic Connection

Colors and textures reminiscent of India, Morocco, and Latin America are in this year, and will be making their way into restaurants, hotels, and retail shops, as well as homes. Ethnic flavor is a driving force in design, and can be accomplished easily by adding a few accent pieces, such as lamps, pillows, or rugs for a splash of culture.

The Moroccan connection brings deep reds and glowing oranges as a backdrop for hand crafted leather, colorful blown glass, and perforated metal work. Latin America gives us golden yellows, turquoise, and dusty rose combined with color-rich woven textiles. The colors of Latin America are as rich and vibrant as the people who live there.

Davis Remignanti, a lead design consultant for Furniture.com, describes this year's accent colors as "spice infused," including russet, acid green, flax, and carnelian combined with chrome and glass.^v

India, described as "the land of color," will showcase orange combined with yellows and greens, much like the colors one would expect to find in a bowl of fruit. Indian colors are vibrant and festive.

Understanding Hollywood Glam

The Hollywood glamour of the 1930s and 1940s is alive and well, with a few updates to keep with current trends. Vintage glamour included crystal, gold, and metallic paints. To achieve today's version of old Hollywood glamour, textured wallpaper infused with metallic threads and gilded mirrors have achieved popularity. Crystal lamps or chandeliers add elegance and style to muted backdrops. Gray-blue is a popular base color against which to highlight a few more elaborate design elements.

A few luxurious touches set against understated tones go a long ways towards creating a look that rekindles the spirit of Hollywood's heyday, yet keep the spaces comfortable. Too much looks gaudy, so the key is to keep it subtle. Dining rooms and living rooms are particularly well suited to this look.

A classic example is the dining room with soft blue walls and contrasting blue table linens and upholstery. A crystal chandelier adds elegance, and a rich antique sideboard gives the space warmth. An ornate gilded mirror pulls the look together, and the use of muted colors prevents the look from becoming overwhelming.

Bringing Hollywood glam into the living room is more about adding an unexpected accent wall, or using cushions and accent rugs to update the room. Gold, crystal, or metallic finishes added to an inviting and comfortable room add depth and elegance without overdoing it.

When creating luxurious surroundings, this year's trend is to keep them warm and inviting, making the richness of the décor understated. This new combination of luxury with natural living has been dubbed "casual luxe," making the surroundings calming and inviting, rather than creating the stiffness of more formal spaces.

Cozy Comforts

Vibrant, colorful rooms with overstuffed furniture or stately antiques that create an atmosphere of warmth and comfort are definitely in this year. Those who have always preferred comfort over style will be able to keep up with the "in" crowd this year, as relaxation and warmth are in, and stuffy, formal styles are out.

Crewel colors, such as those found in rich embroideries, are the hues of the season. They remind us of slower, gentler lives and create a feeling of security and stability. Cranberry reds, pumpkin orange, and warm brown hearken memories of home cooking and family gatherings.

Knitted or crocheted afghans, rugs, blankets, or throws add to the feeling of home and compliment the richness of colors perfectly. To keep the feeling warm and inviting for friends and family to relax and enjoy each others' company, yet

keep the look fresh and modern, unique pairings of colors such as earthy browns or deep plums combined with rose or bronze soothe and calm. A splash of red, which is warm yet invigorating, can be used for an added surprise of color.

For the best results, neutral colored upholstery offset bolder colored fixtures, accessories, and wall coverings. The new neutrals add varying shades of green to camel, taupe, and mocha. These colors are reflective of nature, carrying over the theme of ecologically minded home décor into other realms. Colors that evoke images of rock, stone, and soil are expected to remain trendy throughout the year.^{vi}

The return to colors associated with home and hearth help to satisfy the soul and nurture the spirit. They reflect the growing desire to enjoy a life that is less complicated and hectic, and more grounded.

The New Neutrals

Today's neutrals are anything but noncommittal. Varying shades of green combine with rich medium to dark browns, creating warmth that is perfect for living spaces such as bedrooms and living rooms. These colors reflect the new awareness of earth issues that has found its way into home décor, as well as provide nurturing for weary, overworked souls.

Neutrals in home design will continue to include beiges, browns, taupes, and tans that reflect earth elements such as rock, soil, and stone.

Shades of sage, palm, and fern are being used on walls to bring a sense of calmness and nature into a room, combined with rich furnishings in dark wood and leather. Natural flooring, especially hardwoods, and colorful accent pieces create a comfortable haven from which to escape the stresses of the world. Other earthy tones such as grey-blues, whisper pink, and soft coral can also be considered part of this shift in thinking.

No longer are neutrals equivalent to blandness or frumpiness. Today's neutrals include an entire palette of warm and soothing shades upon which to paint the canvas of the ideal home sanctuary. Some of these new neutrals are even surprising in their boldness, even though they remain soft.

Warmer Metallics

The use of metals is hot this year, and chrome and stainless steel are still being used heavily in home design. They are joined by a variety of new looks, including gray toned metals such as silver, pewter, charcoal, platinum, steel, aluminum, and brushed nickel.

Bronze and copper toned metals have begun a dramatic upswing in popularity, including brushed or oiled finished and hammered metal accents. Metals can add a touch of ethnicity to home décor, while bringing an element of nature into any room. From ultra-modern stainless steel and chrome combined with glass, to warmer coppers and bronzes blended with neutral or spicy colors, metals will remain hot throughout the year.

Feng Shui for the Home

Feng shui, the ancient Chinese art of placement, literally translates to “wind and water.” It is yet another in the earth-conscious decorating trends popular, bringing both ethnic influences and an awareness of the environment into the home. The goal is to create an environment that fosters health, happiness, and wealth. On its most basic level, the art of feng shui is based on the premise that surroundings affect life's circumstances.

Earth elements that comprise feng shui – earth, fire, wood, metal, and water – reflect the same elements seen in other design trends this year. Feng shui takes those elements in a room and balances them to enhance the flow of chi, or life energy, within the room.

Colors connected with feng shui are also those designed to increase peace and calmness, such as terra cotta, peach, tan, cocoa, coral, and cream. Soft pastels such as lavenders, light blues, and greens all fall in line with the colors that are hot. The use of these colors creates a tranquil, quiet atmosphere. The brighter and bolder colors of the spectrum, such as reds and oranges, are considered stimulating and should be used very sparingly with feng shui.

Design elements in feng shui call for soft lines and curvilinear shapes. Avoid hard corners, which are thought to cause negative energy; if you do have strong corners, drape a cascading linen over the piece to soften it.

In the bedroom, colors used to create an intimate atmosphere include pink, subtle red, burgundy, magenta, eggplant, or pomegranate.

Art and other decorative objects in feng shui should represent things one wants to see manifested in life. Mirrors should not be used as decorative items, as they are thought to interfere with rest and bounce too much energy around. The area should have access to plenty of natural light during the daytime, and offer complete darkness for sleep.

Other popular design elements that are not only part of decorating trends, but also fit nicely into feng shui, include pure cotton linens, luxe cashmere, or soft silks. A mixture of textures not only adds interest to the room, but it reflects yet another element of today's design trends.

Wood – one of the key components of this year's design trends – is another important addition with feng shui and represents strength, intuition, growth, and flexibility. Too much wood can be viewed as inflexible, though, leading to a lack of creativity and depression.

Flowers – either fresh or silk, natural fabrics and cotton, plants, and trees finish off a feng shui room with today's design elements seamlessly integrated into the look and provide the softness and gentleness sought through feng shui décor.

Updating Older Home Décor

Keeping with the theme of environmental awareness and the need to reuse and recycle

whenever possible, the prevailing feelings in home décor are to keep current furnishings or major design pieces if possible, and bring them into the modern day by adding a few new elements. New furnishings are best if they come from recycled wood or plastic, or are vintage pieces rescued from estate sales or garage sales. The focus is not only on recycling as much as possible, but also on finding pieces that are multi-functional. Getting rid of furniture or other major decorating pieces is not considered part of the new, earth-friendly trend and is considered passé.

There is a recognition that the home should be comfortable and suit the style of the owner, making anything that the occupant enjoys stylish in its own right. Decorating trends offer the homeowner a wide variety, allowing for individual style and taste, rather than trying to force someone into a particular mold with regard to interior design.

Many of last year's popular trends have been carried over into this year, with updates in color accents to keep the look fresh. The prevalence of environmental consciousness dictates that the main pieces comprising older styles are kept and accented properly to bring them into the modern era. The goal is to eliminate as much waste as possible, while still creating a comfortable and stylish environment.

Earth consciousness has taken center stage, which is easy to incorporate into nearly any home design trend through the addition of natural elements. It seems that anything mimicking or

reflecting nature can be tastefully incorporated to create a fresh, modern style. Items such as stone, granite, and marble that were traditionally reserved for kitchens and bathrooms are making their way into living rooms and bedrooms with great success. Colors previously used exclusively in bedrooms or for youth rooms are making their appearances in adult spaces, softening modern design elements, such as glass and metal, and creating an entirely new and refreshing look for the home.

Hollywood opulence has made a comeback, but subdued by gentle hues and understated elegance that creates a sense of tranquility and comfort. Gone are the days of gaudy room dressings and stuffy, uncomfortable furnishings. The value and beauty of antiques is recognized by combining these pieces with sparse luxury items, making glamour understated and elegant rather than pretentious and stuffy. Even in creating elegant surroundings, attention to comfort and the inclusion of earth elements is of utmost importance in carrying through this year's trends.

These designs are also becoming popular with hotels and business spaces, and will be making appearances in those areas with increasing prevalence. Boutique hotels are already incorporating many design elements, and many of these looks are reflected beautifully by them.

Awareness of earth issues and the need to acknowledge them in the home has led to decorating trends that are expected to continue throughout the year and into next, with deeper

colors and bigger florals making an appearance toward year's end. The inclusion of earth-friendly colors, textures, and elements is expected to usher in a new era in home design that will maintain its popularity for years to come.

i "Color Trends - Individual Flavor Influences Paint Color Trends" www.paintquality.com/diy/content/article/color_trends08.html

ii "Design Trends" www.pointclickhome.com/decorating_design/articles/2008_design_trend_forecast

iii Kathy Peterson of "Kathy Peterson Inspired" www.wnbc.com/print/14902904/detail.html

iv "The Color Purple" featured in The Washington Post <http://patriciagraying.blogspot.com/2008/03/color-purple.html>

v "Industry Experts Elect the Top 10 Home Décor Trends for 2008" www.wnbc.com/print/14902904/detail.html

vi "Color Trends in the Living Room" www.hgtv.com/hgtv/cda/article_print/0,,1983,HGTV_3368_5593038,00.html

The image features a dark, wavy background that resembles a stylized landscape or a cross-section of geological layers. The top half is white, and the bottom half is dark, separated by a wavy line. The text is centered in the dark area.

SECTION FOUR

*About Nine Clouds
Beds*

Chapter 25: Notes From Happy Customers



Singing Nine Clouds Beds' Praises

Dear Bill,

It's not often I sing the praise of a company that has taken and gone the extra mile in service as your company, Nine Clouds Beds!

The fact that within a few short hours after my call regarding my mother mattress, you found the solution to my mother concerns. Not only was the outcome more than anyone could ask for, you're honest and willing manner made the experience with Nine Clouds Beds one which I wouldn't hesitate to recommend.

Stephen from Toronto

A 15 Time Repeat Customer

I am delighted with the sheets and with the service. When you have a minute would you explain the value of the platinum pillow cover, please? And thank you for that. When I saw that the sheets were made in India, I got a little weepy.

I have been there fifteen times on various projects and have seen the tonnes of cotton and watched it grow and be harvested. Maybe I'm sleeping on some of the things I saw there.

Thanks again. I'm sure I'll be in touch about other twin XL that I have.

Catherine from Cayuga

Nine Clouds Beds Probably Saved My Marriage!

Hello Bill,

We had our first night with Rv Vanessa ET...

She's (the recreational vehicle mattress) amazing and saved our vacation, and probably our marriage;-)

Thanks a lot for your great service, Richard was very friendly and helpful, very much appreciated!

BTW you should let a few RV sellers around know that you can sell RV sized mattress with residential quality. I had a very hard time finding

some and I was told by RV sellers they do have many request for these.

Have a great summer !!!

Danny

Will Certainly Recommend Nine Clouds Beds to My Friends

Dear Mr. Laidlaw,

I am writing this letter to recognize the amazing service provided to me over the last 10 days by your salesman, Richard.

Recently, I had an urgent need to buy and have a new king and child's crib mattress delivered on very short notice. Richard was able to get me what I needed - initially we exchanged phone conversations on Saturday April 10th, and then I came to the store later that afternoon. Richard and one of your delivery men personally delivered the mattresses that same evening, after hours.

At the same time, I had purchased a vinyl covering for the king mattress that had to be ordered in. I also had some urgency in obtaining it and getting it on the mattress as quickly as possible, ideally by the following Saturday April 17th. As no delivery people were available that day, Richard came out himself that evening and did all the work.

There is no question that without Richard's help, my plans would not have come together the way they needed to. Both times, he extended himself well beyond what I would have expected

of any employee, and did it with real kindness and consideration.

I will certainly be recommending your store to all my friends based on this excellent service.

*Best Regards,
Jana from Mississauga*

Giving Back to the Community: Thank You Nine Clouds Beds

The Students, Staff and the Family Council of Green Glade Senior Public School would like to extend our thanks to you for your kind contribution to the 2009 Winter Raffle.

The Raffle was help during the annual Winter Concert and was a resounding success. With the kind participation of the local business community, we were able to raise almost \$1,500.00. This money will go to support many of the student activities at Green Glade.

*Thank you,
Green Glade Senior Public School
Peel District School Board*

Very Satisfied!

The meet went smoothly on Friday. I am very happy with the quality of the bed and all its features. As you probably know most furniture dealers say a 48" roll away just isn't made anymore so looking for an improved quality was a waste of time.

Guess Nine Clouds can prove them wrong. Thanks for your help and co-operation.

Leo from North of Bellville

Commitment to the Community: Helping to Raise More Than \$120,000 for Heart House Hospice

Dear Bill,

On behalf of Heart House Hospice and the Heart House Hospice Soiree Committee, I would like to thank you for your kind donation to our silent auction at our October Soiree, Celebrate! Hearts and Hands. This donation is symbolic of your community mindedness and more importantly your commitment to Heart House Hospice.

This year we were able to raise over \$120,000 through the October Soiree. Our aim here at Heart House Hospice is to continue to improve the lives of our clients, who are living with terminal or life threatening illness, and their families. The work that we do is extremely important to the community we serve, and the responsiveness of organizations such as yours is what has sustained us over the last 24 years. As we move towards increasing our reach into the community we hope that you will continue to partner with us for this and other fundraising endeavors.

Thank you for the beautiful headboard. It was a wonderful addition to the auction.

We are very grateful for the support and partnership that you have offered Hospice and look forward to working with you next year.

*With sincere appreciation,
Sabrina Prodger
Coordinator of Special Events
Heart House Hospice*

My Sincere Appreciation and Recommendation

I just wanted to shoot over a quick thank you to the team at Nine Clouds.

I never write these, but just wanted to express my appreciation for how David took care of me when I came to the store.

It seems whenever you go into a store now a days, you are pushed into the more expensive product, but instead, he started with the lower priced mattress and we worked our way up to the right mattress.

It's a great feeling to leave a store – no matter the product – and feel that you not only got a good deal, but a good product as well. I am in the process of re-furnishing my condo and opted for a new sectional from a small company I found on Kijiji (where I found you) which I've come to discover isn't all that high in quality (plus, the after sales service was horrible).

I also went to another furniture store for a new bed (had a perfect condo bed w/drawers underneath) where after selecting it, it was one additional charge after another, plus a serious

back order. These types of situations seem to be more the norm these days, so it's great to stumble onto a great establishment such as yours.

Also, thanks to your delivery guys – very friendly, which again, seems to be outside the norm.

I will be sure to highly recommend you should anyone be looking for a mattress/bed!

Everett, Toronto

A Pleasure Doing Business with Nine Clouds Beds

I received the headboard I ordered, I think it is the Cameo, about an hour ago and I would like to compliment you on your service and delivery. The fellows called me when they were leaving and arrived here promptly and were very polite.

All in all dealing with your company was a pleasure and I will deal with you again and tell my friends.

I'm sure you hear right away when things go wrong but people tend not to let you know when you doing a good job.

It was a pleasure doing business with you, thank again.

Norah Gammon Kitchener

Nine Clouds Beds Delivered as Promised

Hello,

I am writing to thank you for your wonderful service. Dave was the sales associate at your Mississauga location, he was extremely helpful and found me a mattress that was perfect for my sleeping needs and my budget.

The delivery of my mattress was exactly as promised. Not only was it free delivery but the drivers were efficient and very pleasant.

I will highly recommend and will definitely come back in the future.

*With sincere thanks,
L. G., Mississauga*

All-in-All, A Good Purchasing Experience

To the Store Manager.

I would like to thank you and your staff for a pleasant purchasing experience from your store.

My mother, who is in a wheel chair, was looking for an adjustable bed. We came into the Store on Sat. Jan. 13th after researching the store location and products available on the internet. Your salesman met us as we came in and he looked after all her questions. He gave her time to think about the price and did not rush us.

He promised delivery in approx. one week. On Friday Jan 19th he called asking if the bed

could be delivered the next day....I called Saturday morning and was advised delivery would be between 11:00 and 1:00.

At 11:45 the delivery person called and said he would be at the Apt. In 10 minutes.

He was at the back door as promised. The delivery went smoothly, although I did have to lend them some tools (Since rectified, thanks Peter) to assemble the adjustable bed.

All in all it was a good purchasing experience and I thank you.

*Peter M.
Mississauga*

A Pleasant Sale with Zero Pressure

Hi Bill

Just wanted to let you know that we are pleased with the Adjustable Bed.

The sale was pleasant with zero pressure. The delivery men were quite professional and thorough.

The competition could learn a lot from you guys at NineClouds.

*Pleasure doing business with you,
Bruna*

Nine Clouds Beds Goes Above and Beyond: Great Customer Service to a Non-Customer!

April 12th. 8:06pm

“My movers misplaced the screws for the Casey Daybed, is there any way you can order a set for me?”

April 12th 8:23pm

“Where are you located?”

April 13th 9:00am

“Hi Bill, I did not order my bed from you unfortunately because I am extremely impeded with your companies quick response. The store I purchased from is closed and I thought I'd give you a try.”

April 13th 11:30am

“Send me your mailing address Maureen and I'll see what I can arrange. It will take about a week to come from the U.S. sorry”

April 14th 2:18pm

“Oh that is to be expected, I just really appreciate you doing this for me.”

April 25th 4:41pm

“Dropped in the mail today Maureen”

April 27th 3:34pm

“Boy was there a smile on my face last night when I walked in the door.

The bed is together, and the best was when Taylor walked into my room and said “Finally my

room looks like a bedroom”. We moved in March 4th, so that was wonderful to hear! Thank you so much Bill, what great customer service for a non-customer!”

Maureen from Toronto

Eternally Grateful for Nine Clouds Beds' Off-the-Hook Service

Possible Customer Via email (10 p.m. Saturday)

Hello, My mother-in-law thinks she has one of your electric beds, Model #88021 with remote control (March 2007). She received no guidebook with this bed and I am trying to trouble shoot a problem. Without notice, the remote stopped working. I have replaced the batteries in both the remote control and the black box under the bed. I also tried unplugging the bed and then plugging it back in, but to no avail. When the remote buttons are pushed the lights on both the remote and the black box flash.

Can you please help?

Bill from Nine Clouds (7 a.m. Sunday)

Do have your invoice number handy? It will make it easier to find your mother in law's bill and have a service call placed with the manufacturer.

Customer (9 a.m. Sunday)

Ill ask her for it ASAP and get back to you. Thanks for this quick response.

Bill from Nine Clouds (10:30 a.m. Sunday)

I have checked February, March and April of last year and found no Adjustable Bed sold to either name you have given me Mr Mizzi. Perhaps the invoice was written in someone else's name or during a different time frame?

Customer (11:30 a.m. Sunday)

We're still looking for the receipt and my mother-in-law does not remember where it was purchased, so you may be off the hook. I'll get back to you.

Bill from Nine Clouds (11:40 a.m. Sunday)

Not looking to get off the hook.

Check out the attached scans from a guide I have in my files they may help.

Customer (7:30 p.m. Sunday)

You are amazing! Thanks...I read the guides you sent and reset the bed and it worked! My mother-in-law is eternally grateful and so am I.

PS: By the way, I was not implying that you were looking to get "off the hook". I just did not want you to feel obligated to help me if the bed was not purchased through your firm as that would not be fair to you, and in fact, the bed was purchased from a large chain store. I know this now because my Mother in law just located her manual and receipt. You and your company are a class act and I am very impressed, especially these days when it is so hard to find firms that back up their products. Thanks again.

E. Mizzi, Waterdown, Ontario

Chapter 26: Frequently Asked Questions



Q. Do you have delivery?

A. Yes we do, on most items there will be no charge for items delivered in our local trading area.

Q. Do you take orders over the phone?

A. Yes we do, all the time. Please call us any time during business hours. We will take delivery instructions from you and inform you of an expected arrival date (usually within a week). If you wish to pay via credit card we will process your transaction today and bring a copy of the slip with your delivery. Other payment options are cash on delivery or certified check.

Q. Do you set up the goods being delivered?

- A. We do on most items if requested at the time of purchase. Set up of products does take time and will change the delivery schedule for other customers receiving goods that day, therefore we ask that you let us know at the time of purchase.

Q. Will my new mattress and foundation fit up the stairs?

- A. Most of the time this is not an issue. If there is a problem in your house there are a number of mattresses that can be folded almost in half without damage. If the foundation does not fit (this can occasionally be a problem with a queen size purchase) a split queen foundation can be ordered at an additional cost.

Q. Do you take away the old mattress?

- A. Yes we will dispose of the product being replaced if requested at the time you place your order.

Q. What if I am not comfortable on my new mattress?

- A. You should give your new mattress at least one week before calling your sales person. You have sixty days to make a possible reselection. A stain proof mattress cover must be used during this period. If your mattress is soiled in any way we will not be able to accept it back.

Q. What does it mean if there are body impressions in my new mattress?

- A. Body impressions are a natural occurrence with a new mattress, particularly those that are thick and plush. Please give your new mattress a chance to break in, this process should take around one month. Each manufacturer has expected body impression limits which if crossed will be looked after promptly.

Q. How do our prices compare with our competitors?

- A. We are more than competitive, having only one location you have to be. We will beat any competitor's verified quote by at least 6%.

Q. Do you sell custom sizes?

- A. Yes we do, we have over a dozen mattresses that are available in made to order sizes. The cost is the same as the closest standard size larger than that which you are purchasing.

Q. Can you make me a round mattress?

- A. Unfortunately no, we get asked this question every couple of years and have yet to find a supplier to make them.

Q. Can I buy just the mattress or foundation?

- A. Yes you can.

Q. Why is the price of just the mattress not half the price of a complete set?

- A. In recent years, as mattresses have grown in thickness and complexity, the cost of purchasing just the mattress has risen from

60% to as high as 85%. There are many more construction elements involved in the design of a mattress than that of the foundation.

Q. Can we buy just the headboard and not the footboard?

- A. In most cases you can, only a few designs require the purchase of both.

Q. How long will my new mattress last?

- A. Most mattresses manufactured today come with a full ten year non-prorated warranty. If a valid warranty claim is authorized by the manufacturer they will decide whether your mattress will be exchanged for a similar current product or will need to be returned for repair to their plant. A stain proof mattress cover must be used, if your mattress is soiled in any way the manufacturer will not repair or exchange it.

Q. Why do I need a center support roller frame for my new mattress set?

- A. It is required for warranty coverage by all manufacturers. Without this extra support the foundation will warp over time and not provide the proper support to the mattress. If you have ever had a bed that seems to be lower in the middle causing you to roll into the center this has happened because the box spring was not properly supported.

Q. Do we carry a mattress called.....?

- A. Manufacturers have many model names and covers, although we may not carry the model you are looking for we likely have a very similar mattress with same specifications.

Q. Why does a single ended bed roller-frame not protrude further from the foot of the bed?

- A. A single ended bed frame (one that you attach only a headboard to, no footboard) does not need to protrude from the foot of the bed for it to support properly. In fact you would not want it to because you would risk scraping your ankle every time you walked by this high grade steel frame.

Q. Why is there such a gap between my footboard and the bottom of the mattress?

- A. The gap is there to make it easier to tuck in sheets and leave ample room for your duvet or comforter.

Q. Do your delivery men work for you or are they private contractors?

- A. Yes they do work only for us. They are the vital last contact you have with Nine Clouds and the level of service would certainly be reduced if they worked for an unrelated delivery company.

Q. Why are the mattresses so high?

- A. Modern mattresses are more comfortable and much thicker than those produced even ten years ago, often will require deep pocket fitted

sheets. If requested at the time of purchase we can order a low profile box spring that will lower your set about four inches. Low riding roller bed frames are also available that will reduce this height even further.

Q. Which manufacturer makes the best mattress?

A. There is no simple answer to this question, each company has their own approach to making the best mattress. At the January trade show each year we choose the best values from each manufacturer and place them on our floor for your evaluation. If the answer was the same for everyone we would need less than a handful (we have over sixty) of sets in our store. Only you can decide what is most comfortable and while still fitting your budget.

Q. Your prices appear to be higher than some other retailers that we have found on the web.

A. We sell only locally in Southern Ontario and deliver most merchandise with our own truck therefore the level of service you will receive will be substantially higher than with an American or Out of Province store. These services include delivery to your room and even set up of many of the items we supply.

If something goes wrong with your product we are here to help. If it arrives damaged when you open your box, we will take care of it. There are hidden costs in buying from the U.S. such as high shipping, brokerage costs,

duty costs and other fees. These will add substantially to the end amount you are out of pocket. If your goods are damaged when you open them your paperwork nightmare has just begun. As well you will likely have to pay most of these fees again if and as when your replacement arrives.

Chapter 27: Exquisite Sleep Episodes



Exquisite Sleep Episode 15: Candid Email From Senior Bed Salesman John (Makes me smile!)

I was copied yesterday on an email from John in our showroom. It was sent to the three other sales staff he works with most often each week. We are a family run smallish business, with few staff, and we are talking about ten hour days during the week. So of course it definitely helps if everyone gets along and yes they do.....

Dear Mik, Kristina and Daniel:

Just wanted you guys to know how proud I am being part of our team and of you guys especially. You guys are awesome kids that teach an old

guy like me new things. The accomplishments you've made and what you're trying to achieve are so awesome – I've used 'awesome' twice so far but that's just what you three are. Working with you is a pleasure. Your work habits, ethics are wonderful. You create an easy atmosphere for others working with you. We've accomplished tasks so easily and with a smile.

Today, for example, I started to organize the pillow section and Mik took over with better ideas that also involved organizing the sheet sets. Normally, you need a person in charge of a project or a manager telling you what to do. Not here. We manage "us" wonderfully. We help and support one another. No hard feelings. Always on good friendly basis.

I'm 46 and been through good jobs and bad ones. This is THE best job I've ever had and it's got a lot to do with you three. I love you guys. Thanks again for being my friends. I would have been a much better person had I had friends like you growing up.

— John

Exquisite Sleep Episode 14: Vivid Memories of Yesterday

I remember vividly the day I learned to ride a bike, in a Central Toronto park on that ruin of a tennis tarmac at the crest of a favored toboggan run. Freedom! It was the early 60's, hardly yesterday.

I can recall instantly the day I taught our oldest son to ride a bike. We chose the well known safe ground of Apple Tree Daycare, a graveled lot in South Mississauga. It was the late 90's, not exactly yesterday.

I won't forget the day our daughter announced (questioned) "All my friends have driven a car around a parking lot". Toronto was an hour away



but the now paved lot remained minutes from our home. A recess long period of mistake-free motoring, at no-gas-pedal speed, left me asking “was this enough for a first try”? A Wonderland grin and a revved engine were her only answers. It was yesterday.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 13: Learning to Fly

I could not give return directions to this park but I recall what took place.

A young Connor, often wary, always sensible, suddenly out of character?



He asked to take this leap of faith.

And smiled for it's full descent.

There will be many more opportunities for flight Con.

Jump! Keep grinning, whether I am there to snap your photo or not.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 12: Our Son's New Job

Our 21 year old son just started his first real job outside of working at the store.



It's a great gig, very relevant to his current University studies.

Upon arrival he and the nine other new hires were subjected to a driver's abstract check.

Only one kid was insurable (speeding tickets and accidents) by the workplace policy, our son.

A beaming father slept exquisitely that night.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 11: Defriended By My 12 Year Old Son



He Facebook friended me last year out of sweet innocence I guess.

Never considering what his contemporaries would think of a parent looking over their shoulders.

In private he still lets me hug him, on school grounds it is no longer going to happen.

It took a few hours but I got over it and now completely understand.

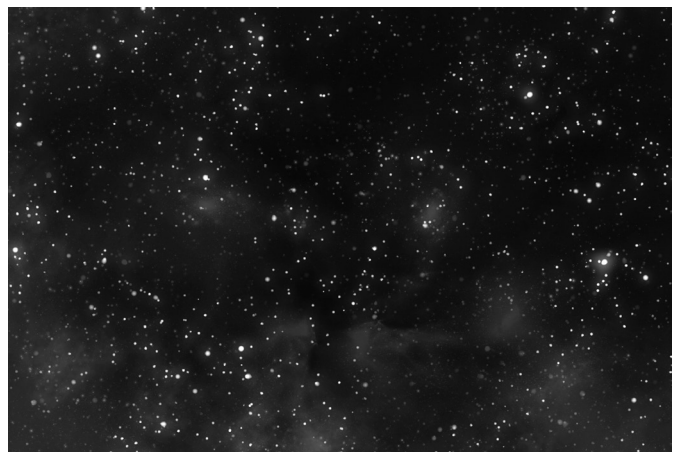
Growing up, I would have done the same thing.

Believe it or not I slept exquisitely last night.

(Update he has refriended me despite my pleas that it was alright)

Exquisite Sleep Episode 10: Nostalgia For The Light

Our twelve year old son had the day off from school yesterday. I decided (I purchased the tickets without asking him) he should join us at the movies.



I am always on the lookout for well reviewed feature films, a search that over the last few years has been conducted exclusively online. Recently we received an almost free subscription (hah!) to the Toronto Star. I skimmed through the entertainment section quickly noticing a four out of four review of a film that as a bonus was playing at the new TIFF Bell Lightbox.

The lead photo (my only clue as to the topic) for the review was similar to the one above. I am one of those who wishes to go into a cinema knowing as little as possible about a movie in order to maintain surprise.

Well surprise is what I got, as “Nostalgia For The Light” slowly climbed history’s ladder from telescopes exploring the origins of the universe, to ten thousand year old etchings of long lost tribes, to the decades old bone fragments of those murdered by the Chile’s Pinochet regime, yikes.

It seems the air in the Atacama Desert is the one place on earth with zero percent humidity. This makes it as perfect for astronomers peering telescopes, as it is for archaeologists inquisitive digs, as it is for the success of heartbreaking searches (albeit a remote chance, only because of it’s vastness) for decades old remains by still grieving Chileans.

I sat beside our, mature for his years, son fairly confident that he could handle the message but looking for signs of overt dissatisfaction..... nothing.

Later over lunch he gave the movie an all time low (he likes everything!) 5 out of 10. Offered with no malice, this was the only indication that he had not enjoyed “Nostalgia For The Light“ or his afternoon with his parents.

Our youngest is growing into a man and I slept exquisitely last night.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 9: 21st Birthday Craft, Brother to Brother

It was our oldest son’s twenty first birthday last Wednesday. Our youngest set his mind to decorating the house before his brother got home from work. Below I will feebly attempt to crawl inside his head and understand his thought process.

He is twenty one, this is supposed to be a big deal right?

How can we celebrate 21?

What else equals 21?



21 and celebrate what connects them?

Eureka (says the blogger clearly dating himself)
21 gun salute!

No cannons allowed in our house hmm...?

I could draw cannons? But I kinda suck at drawing?

Eureka number two!

That night a newly minted twenty one year old angled up the stairs towards his bedroom and was greeted on either side by twenty one 8 1/2 by 11 paper sheets that looked like this!



Having a son with a mind like this makes sleep exquisite.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 8: Determination!

Early enough one summer's morning to still have her pjs on.

Mom, importantly confirmed to be far from sight. Lucky girl to be born with this kind of determination, not all of us are.



As we get older our good (more determined) days are often (ha!) spaced farther apart.

Sleep well, it will help.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 7: "Sugar Plum Fairies of Light"?

As children we scanned our brains for ways to



bridge quickly the Night Before Christmas gap.

December 24th, late afternoon, now empty of sunlight.

As if you could really place the stars in the sky.

Why did every disappearing ray of sun end up dancing in our heads?

Peaceful sleep finally came to an eager child and Christmas Day was exquisite.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 6: Frosty and Son

I barely noticed the snowman motif on my desk last night when I got home from the store.

I pushed it aside, to leave more room for my keyboard.

The decorating has picked up speed in our home the last few days.

The kids are pumped, eagerly jumping in with their final touches.

I Just found out Connor our youngest chose this piece for my desk.

He picked it because he felt it represented he and I and Christmas, and I had just brushed it aside.

Sometimes we need reminders of how special Christmas is for our kids.



I no longer require any such help.

Hereafter “Frosty and Son” will occupy prime real estate on my desk every Christmas and I will sleep exquisitely tonight.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 5: Graduation Caps

Pretty cool getting to toss a graduation cap skyward at ten years old. After so many years it's off to middle school. The kids seemed more ready than we were.

There are a number of last days in our lives:



Last day at Day Care. "I am not a baby"

Last day in Kindergarten. "I am big now"

Last day at Public School. "I am not a kid, I'm almost a pre-teen"

Last day at Middle School. "I am a teenager, (finally)"

Last day at High School. "I am an adult (aren't I?)

Last day of University. "I really am an adult (got to earn a living)"

Last day single. "I am in love"

Last day without kids "I am going to be a parent"

Last day with kids "I am free (not)"

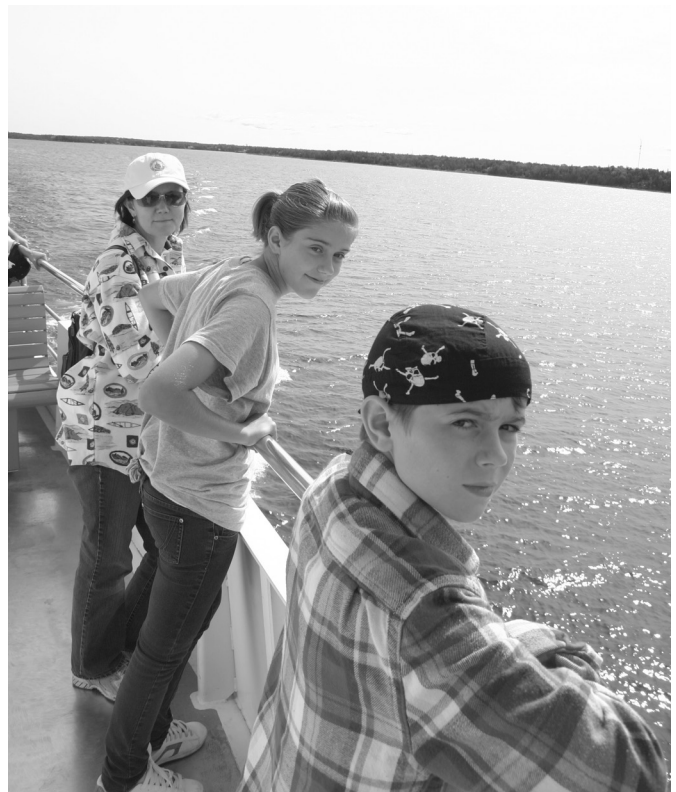
A good bed gives you comfort (never as much as family) all the way.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 4: The Safety Mouse

Ever vigilant.

Standing watch over our two youngest at ship's edge, life's edge.

Subject of our teasing, occasionally complete with averted rolling eyes.



A good mattress leads to good sleep.

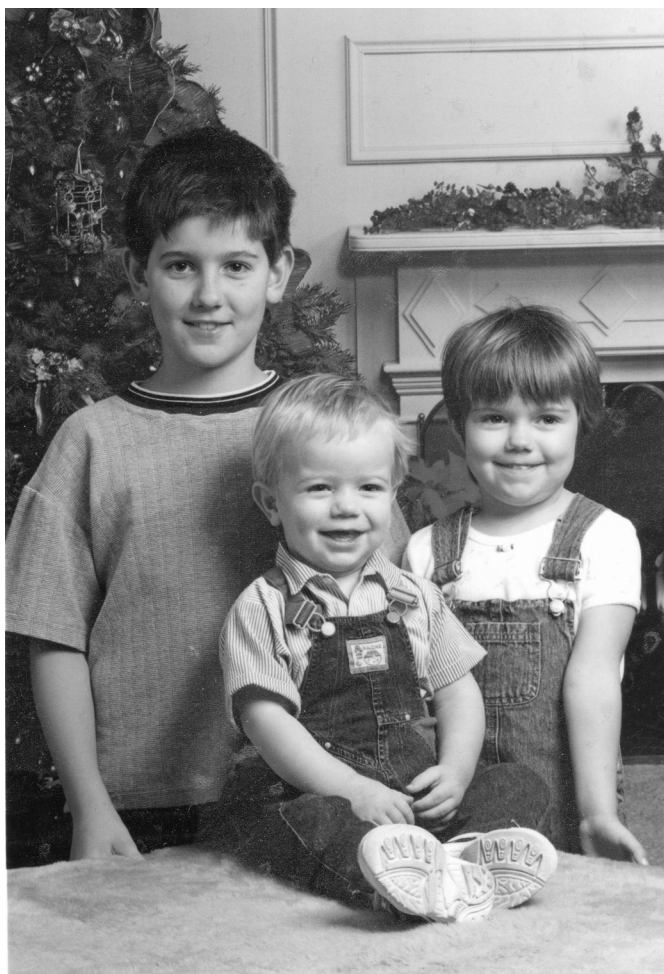
Truth be told.... “the safety mouse’s” constant guard makes sleep exquisite.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 3: The Babies Are Gone...

Large gap between kids for us....seven years.

Then two in two years. What was in the water in Oakville anyway?

I still call them “the babies” something I think they have gotten used to, as they are now eleven and thirteen.



When they were younger they constantly scolded me for using my term of endearment as they were “not babies anymore!”

Repetition may have worked?

Staffing issues have caused my wife and I to take separate vacations over the last year and she is Down South with “the babies” this week.

For me it’s like a quick flash forward to a time when the babies will be gone and our house, that once seemed just right in size, may feel large and a little empty.

Most couples talk about that day when the last child is gone in glowing terms. Freedom at last!

For me it was a little sad walking through the front door to a quiet house.

It was a little difficult to sleep well last night, even on a really comfy mattress.

Exquisite sleep will return in six days.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 2: Almost 20 Years Since We Slept...on Just About Anything

Before babies we could sleep on anything, never waking in the middle of the night.

November 17th. 1989 our world changed. In that first year I could lay him down on my belly, tiny head resting on ribs over my heart. He to, could sleep on anything.



It will be his twentieth birthday soon. It doesn't feel like yesterday but 20 years?

He's closer in time to caressing his own first born than he is to our first day together.

These days a comfy bed makes good sleep possible, having a son we can proud of makes good sleep, exquisite.

Exquisite Sleep Episode 1: She Scored!

"She Scored!"

We haven't heard it yet but we know we will.

Likely after a particularly good night's sleep.



She plays rep-soccer, mostly defense but occasionally mid field, closer to the elusive scoring zone. Maybe she's a little apprehensive about taking shots, concerned about the pressure of a missing strike.

When that ball finally eludes a vigilant keeper we'll watch for the humble smile of a daughter who has succeeded on more places than just the soccer pitch.

"We scored".

If this is your daughter exquisite sleep is this close.

Exquisite Sleep Episode: Don't tell us to take away the furniture boxes until you ask your kids first!

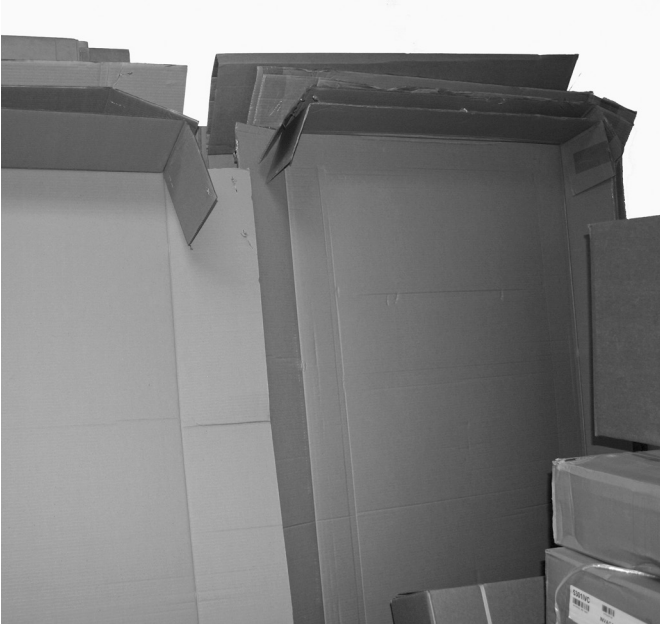
At Nine Clouds Beds we are always happy to take away all the packing material that your new purchase comes in if we have the space in our truck and the time to spare but....

Think back to when you were a kid.

Who enjoyed that new furniture or appliance purchase more, your parents or you when you found the box was still there when you got home from school?

First you just had fun climbing into it.

Then you found the one pair of scissors your Mom would trust you with and turned a simple



packing box into a mysterious lair (Riddle me this Batman!) or your very own house!

In the end you found maybe greatest pleasure in breaking the box apart...

and then if season was right you and your friends carted the box fragments to the local park hill to use as toboggans on the dry summer grass.

Sometimes the best toys are free.

