

I'm sure you'd agree everyone is tired of snoring.

So, here are 6 evidence-based, self-help ways, to stop:

- 1 If you're overweight, try to lose weight. We get fat inwards as well as outwards.
- 2 Avoid evening alcohol. Alcohol super relaxes your throat – which makes it floppy and prone to vibrate (and you snore).
- 3 Stop smoking. Smoking inflames the tissues of your throat which makes your airway narrower, so you snore.
- 4 Get off your back! Gravity pulls your tongue backwards and narrows your airway. Ditto point 3.
- 5 Keep your nose clear. If you can't breathe through your nose you have to breathe through your mouth. When your mouth opens it moves downwards and **backwards** – narrowing the airway in your throat. As point 3 & 4.
- 6 Avoid sedative medication i.e. sleeping pills and painkillers (Consult your GP re alternatives if you have a diagnosed condition that requires their use).

You can't fix something if you don't know what is wrong...

Self-help and lifestyle changes may help, but they may be insufficient, or their effect may not last over time.

Now it's time to seek professional help.

Help yourself and your healthcare professional by completing your assessment forms in your own time - online. Then get directed to the most appropriate expertise.

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Need a reminder of why you're bothering?

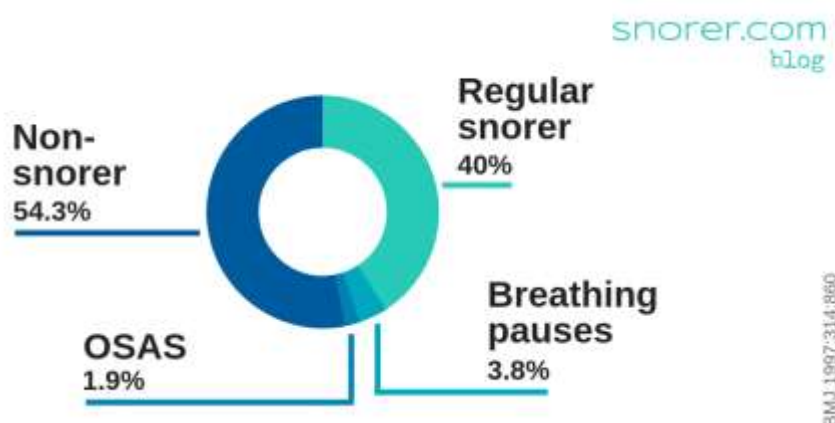
Not snoring means:

- You may maintain intimacy with your partner
- You may share hotel rooms
- You may stay over at friends
- You may fly long-haul without complaint
- You won't experience a sore throat / dry mouth on waking

From a health perspective, snoring may lead to high blood pressure (your throat vibrating may harden artery walls).

Relationships impacted by snoring

Snoring is a huge problem in relationships. As we get older it only gets worse. If you wake up alone after going to bed together - its a warning of a slippery slope.



But why do I need screening for sleep apnoea if I snore?

Snoring may be a symptom of obstructive sleep apnoea. Trying to fix the noise of snoring without knowing if you have sleep apnoea is like turning off the fire alarm and ignoring the fire.

Only a sleep-trained professional can tell you that you 'just' snore.

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What is Obstructive Sleep Apnoea?

Obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) occurs when you cannot sleep and breathe at the same time.

The airway in your throat repeatedly narrows and little air gets to your lungs.

Sufferers snore and are drowsy in the day because they must wake up to breathe.

What are the benefits of obstructive sleep apnoea treatment?

Sleep apnoea treatment will make you healthier, live longer and feel better. No more morning headache, no more drowsiness and falling asleep during the day.

How do I find out if I just snore?

You can do this for free.

It's called Signposting and it works like this:

1. Complete your assessment forms online.
2. Get directed to the *right* professional.
3. Then your GP (or additionally in the UK, a sleep-trained dentist) can check if your snoring may be a symptom of sleep apnoea or perhaps another problem.
4. If your snoring needs checking, you would be referred to hospital to see a sleep expert.
5. If you 'just' snore a UK sleep-trained dentist can offer you a custom-made anti-snoring device (currently a private treatment) without you having to go to the hospital first.

A Clinical Decision Support System (CDSS) is regulated software that helps healthcare professionals make good decisions.

It is also known as Software as a Medical Device (SaMD).

The manufacturer has to register with the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority and CE mark the CDSS.

So, I go through Signposting and then what?

There are essentially four categories of treatment for snoring and obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA).

They are:

1. Custom-made anti-snoring devices are appropriate for snorers.
2. Positive Airway Pressure therapy (PAP) is appropriate for sleep apnoea and it's 'free' in the UK, paid by the NHS (because it makes financial sense).
3. Surgery for snoring will remove an obstruction in your throat or nose or help another treatment to work better.
4. Bariatric surgery (in combination with PAP therapy) if you are obese and it is considered the reason you have sleep apnoea.

The NHS will not help if you snore without sleep apnoea symptoms.

What happens now?

That's up to you and your partner.

If you want to know if you 'just' snore and find out how to permanently stop then get Signposted.

If you're concerned you may have sleep apnoea, then get Signposted and have your GP take you seriously.

If you have diabetes and are drowsy during the day, then get Signposted and seek a referral for a sleep study via your GP.

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