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**DISCOVER AN ALL NATURAL METHOD
THAT PERMANENTLY ELIMINATES SNORING...**

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Do You Have a Snoring Problem?



Do you keep your spouse or roommate up at night with the noise you make while sleeping? Do you wake up in the morning not feeling completely rested? Does this happen to you more than a couple of times a week?

Everyone snores occasionally, but if you're a habitual snorer when you sleep, you may actually have a real snoring problem. Snoring is a significant problem that can not only affect you, your health, and your ability to concentrate; but it can also affect the people who sleep in the same room—and sometimes in the same house—as you do.

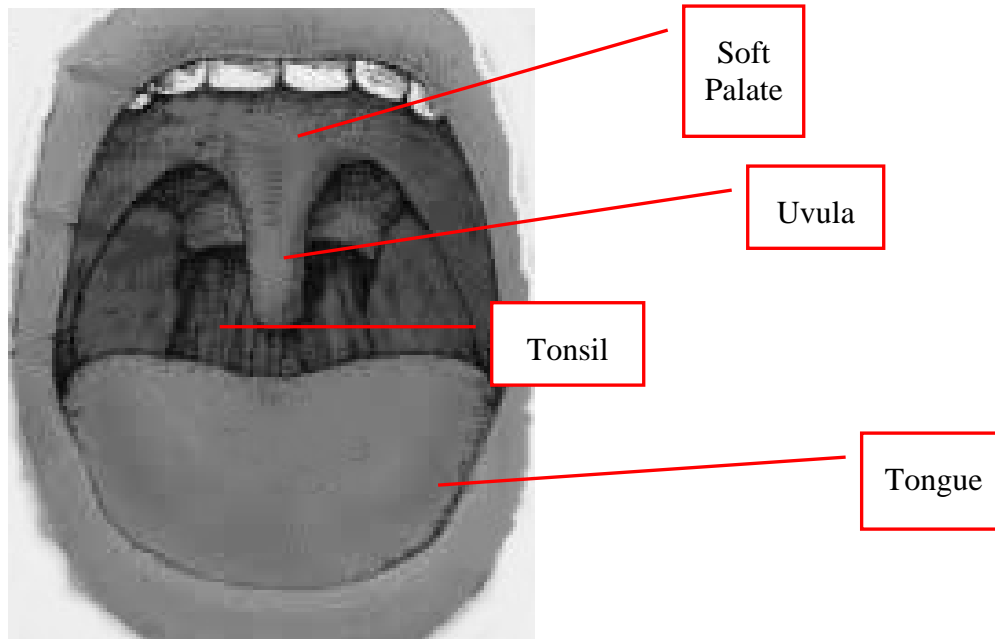
This book will explore what snoring is, what causes snoring, and the various ways to improve snoring. The book will help you determine whether or not your snoring problem is a result of sleep apnea or another serious medically-related snoring condition, as well as common risks associated with being or becoming a snorer, and help you decide when you should seek out the help of a physician.

Most importantly, this book includes exercises that you can do on your own, virtually any time and anywhere, without any special equipment, to improve your snoring. The exercises focus not only on the muscles and body parts associated with breathing and snoring, but also focuses on overall health improvement and the mind-body-spirit connection.



This information in this book is compiled for your benefit, but it does not replace the need to consult with a physician, particularly if you are concerned about your health. Only a physician can properly diagnose any underlying health issues you may be experiencing, including sleep disorders, so if you are at all concerned about your health or think you may have something more serious than snoring going on, please consult a physician.

What is Snoring?



Snoring is caused by a vibration in the soft tissues at the back of the throat, including the uvula and the soft palate. Snoring occurs while you are sleeping.

The vibrations are caused by your breathing passages either being blocked or severely narrowed while you are breathing, when your muscles relax and your tongue falls back.

The noise can vary from person to person and can sound like everything from a rumbling to a rasp to a jet engine taking off.

Some people are completely unaware of the fact that they snore, and it is not until they are sharing a room with a partner or spouse (or sharing a hotel room on a business trip) that they discover how loudly they snore. Needless to say, if your snoring is loud enough to interrupt someone else's sleep, it's worth trying to resolve the problem.

For a long time, snoring was considered harmless; today we know that snoring can be a sign of upper respiratory resistance syndrome and obstructive sleep apnea, both of which can be extremely dangerous.

Snoring is more common in men than in women; almost half of all men snore while only about one-third of women do. Regardless of your gender, however, snoring can be more than just a nuisance in your life and can lead to or be a symptom of several other health complications.

What Causes Snoring?

As previously mentioned, the sound of snoring is created when the soft tissues of the back of the throat—in the airway—vibrate because of a narrowed or blocked passageway. During sleep, you are in a more relaxed state. Every time you inhale, the air you breathe flows in through your mouth or nose and across the soft palate (the fleshy part of the inside of your mouth between the hard ridge and the back of your throat).



This soft palate area, including your uvula, is capable of collapsing during sleep. It is from here that the breathing passageway becomes blocked or narrowed enough to disturb the air you're breathing and cause the vibrations. When the soft palate collapses and narrows the airway, your body works harder to draw in breath. As the uvula and soft palate are vibrated against the back of the throat, the snoring sound is made. If you still have your tonsils and/or adenoids, those, too can vibrate and add to the sound. The stronger the vibrations are, the louder the snore.

Snoring only occurs during sleep, because when you are awake, the muscles of your throat hold the soft tissues in place. It's only when you sleep that these muscles relax enough to allow the tissue to collapse and cause the obstruction.

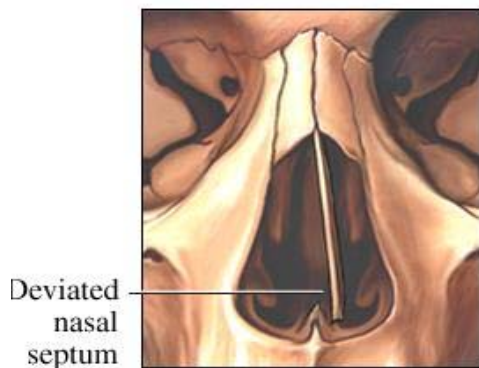


Air passage being partially blocked during sleep, causing snoring.

Diagnosing Your Snoring Problem

There are many reasons why your airway may be narrowed enough, or blocked enough, to cause you to snore. One of the main reasons for snoring in kids, which can also be a cause in adults, is enlarged tonsils. Other tissues in the nose, mouth, or throat can be enlarged as well, particularly if you have a sore throat, cold, or flu. These temporary swellings can cause snoring; sometimes tonsils are very large and cause snoring. Consult with an Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) specialist to determine if tonsil removal is worth the risk.

Another cause of snoring can be having a stuffy nose. Whether this is a short-term condition brought on by a cold or upper respiratory infection or a long-term condition because of chronic sinus infections, snoring will occur because of the effect on the tissues in the throat, which pull together when it takes more effort to breathe. This narrows the passageway and increases the likelihood of snoring.



A deviated septum can also cause snoring, since it disrupts the airflow through the nose. The septum is the part of the cartilage inside the nose that makes the nose into two nostrils. The septum typically is found in the center of the nose, equally dividing the nostrils, but a deviated septum leans to the right or to the left and partially

obstructs the nasal passage on the side to which it leans. In addition to snoring, a deviated septum can cause issues with sinuses and breathing.

A lack of muscle tone in the throat can also be a cause of snoring, because the lack of muscle tone makes it easier for the soft tissues to collapse during sleep. Both age and poor physical fitness can attribute to this problem.

Drinking alcohol or taking medicines that cause drowsiness can also result in the likelihood of increased snoring. Alcohol affects the part of the brain that controls breathing and can cause you to overly relax the muscles in your throat and tongue, blocking air movement and restricting passageways.

Weight and Snoring

Snoring can be vastly exacerbated by obesity. Fat deposits in the area of the throat restrict the airway, put increased pressure on the airway, and are virtually guaranteed to cause some snoring. Obesity is one of the most common, correctible causes of snoring.

As your body gains more and more weight, fat deposits develop not only in the throat but eventually in the nasal cavity as well. These obstructions cause snoring to become more of a problem.

Obesity is becoming a buzzword in this country and is often blamed for many different problems in the human body, but the problem with obesity and snoring is the vicious cycle it creates.

Obesity is dangerous for your health—even life-threatening. The heavier you are, the louder you'll snore. The problem is—and this is the vicious cycle—obesity increases your snoring, and snoring makes it more difficult for you to sleep peacefully and deeply. Lack of sleep—not spending enough time in REM and deep sleep patterns—is associated with an increase in weight. Basically, once the pattern of weight-related snoring begins, it can actually continue to make itself worse.

Losing weight is an absolute necessity to break this vicious cycle.

Your Health and Snoring

Snoring is not, in and of itself, a health condition. However, people who snore often have other risk factors. We've underlined the relationship between obesity and snoring, but snoring is also associated with an increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

Pregnant women who begin snoring may be giving off signs of prenatal high blood pressure and should be sure to have it monitored. Children who snore may have issues with sinuses, tonsils, adenoids, or sleep disturbances. Snoring in children has been correlated with lower intelligence scores and increases in behavioral difficulties.

There are many things you can do to treat snoring problems. For some people it requires a more drastic lifestyle change than others, but several things you can do to help stop snoring include:

- Sleeping on your left side.
- Losing weight.
- Reducing your consumption of alcohol.
- Quitting or reducing the amount of cigarettes you smoke.
- Elevating your head while you sleep.

If you are not concerned about your own health because of your snoring, you may need to worry about your spouse's health. Snoring can keep you

from sleeping as deeply and peacefully as you should, interrupting your sleep cycles and reducing your oxygen. It can leave you feeling groggy and unclear throughout the next day.

The effect on a spouse, roommate, or partner can often be worse. Not only are they continually awakened by the sound of your snoring, but studies have shown that the level of stress created on the spouse of a snorer has a very negative impact on their health.

While most couples enjoy the prospect of cuddling up and going to sleep together, when a person has a snoring partner it can be a nightmare. According to research, more than 30% of couples are dramatically affected by the snoring of one of the partners, resulting in anger, stress, arguing, and even separate sleeping arrangements.

Because it's not the snoring itself that can cause health concerns but the lack of sleep it causes, whatever health risks you might be exposed to by being a snoring sleeper may also affect your spouse.

Taking whatever actions you can to improve your snoring will help you both.

Treatments for Snoring

While there are several steps you can take on your own, as mentioned in the previous section, such as losing weight, changing your sleep position, reducing your use of alcohol and cigarettes, and elevating your head, there are several other approaches for treating snoring.



This book includes many different suggestions for exercise to help alleviate snoring symptoms. As with ANY exercise program, you should consult your own physician before beginning any new program of exercise. While some of the exercises included in this book may seem simple, only you and your physician know if they are safe for you and whatever health conditions you may have. Proceed at your own risk!



If a stuffy nose is your main problem, whether from chronic sinus infections or a temporary cold, a nasal decongestant can work wonders on your ability to breathe freely and therefore snore less. Other options to consider if you're dealing with congested nasal passages are nasal strips that widen the passageways, nasal sprays, and a humidifier or steam treatments may help.

There are special products on the market designed solely to reduce snoring. They include:

- **Nose strips.** Nose strips can be applied to your nose to help pull your nostrils apart so that the airflow through your nostrils is not blocked. While this will work well if you have a deviated septum or nasal congestion, it won't do much at all if you snore because you are overweight, drink too much, or have a collapsing soft palate.



- **Snoring sprays.** These sprays market themselves as "stop snoring" sprays. The likelihood of them working well has not been established.



- **Snoring gum, snoring nose drops.** Unfortunately, there's no evidence that these commercial products actually do much to help, either.



- **Mouthpieces.** While mouthpieces can save you a fortune in dental work if you grind your teeth at night, these specially-made, form-fitting pieces show no evidence of helping prevent snoring.



- **Anti-snoring pills.** Again, this is more of a marketing gimmick than a proven solution.



- **Air filters.** If your snoring is caused by nasal congestion, and your nasal congestion is caused by allergies, air filters can help indirectly by reducing the number of allergens in the air...and on the topic of allergies, you should address things like laundry soap, linens, and mites and dust in your mattress and in your room, as well as consider switching to hypoallergenic pillows.
- **Mouth exercises.** Studies have shown that mouth exercises that tone the muscles in the throat and mouth, relax the jaw, and firm the soft palate may help reduce snoring.



If your snoring is serious or is a symptom of sleep apnea (a condition characterized by temporary breathing interruptions during sleep), your

doctor may recommend that you undergo a sleep study (where you sleep in a hospital lab so that the lab tech can monitor your breathing). They may recommend that you be fitted with a breathing regulator that will help ensure that you breathe throughout the night. If you have irregular breathing or stop breathing for several seconds at a time throughout the night, seek medical help!

If your snoring is not caused by sleep apnea, there are several different exercises you can do to help improve the muscle tone and your breathing passageways to help you snore less. Regardless of whether it's your soft palate collapsing, your tongue obstructing your passageway as you sleep, narrow or stuffy nasal passages, or a tense jaw, there are exercises you can do to improve the condition.



These exercises should only be performed after verifying with a health-care professional that you can safely perform the exercises. This book is not intended to replace your healthcare provider nor is it personalized for individual health care needs. It is intended only as a guide and should be treated as such. Do not perform an exercise that causes you undue strain or could potentially cause you injury.

The Jaw

The jaw is possibly the least obvious contributor to snoring, but if think about it, the jaw is often a place where stress is exhibited. Clenched teeth, a tense jaw, the little flexing of the muscle below the cheek...these are all areas which, in sleep, can affect the flow of air.

There are several jaw exercises you can do that may improve your snoring.

Reading aloud. Reading aloud is a great exercise for the jaw. Whether you are reading to yourself or use it as an excuse to bond with your children, it forces you to use muscles that may be rusty from lack of use and the reading will tone the muscles as well. To make the exercise even more effective (it's an exercise often used not for snoring but by speech therapists), place something between your teeth that is about the size of a jaw breaker. Hold onto the item with your teeth while you read or recite something. Your muscles will get sore quickly, but you only have to do it for a couple of minutes to tone the muscles.

Jaw stretches. The majority of people not only keep their mouths closed, but tense their jaws and clench their molars together. It's a natural reaction to stress, but it can cause tight, stressed muscles. To relax the jaw, work on stretching it. Line up your jaw by placing your top and bottom molars together, then drop your bottom jaw as far down as you can. You should feel a light stretch, but it should actually feel relieving. Amazingly enough, some of the exercises you'll be doing here to reduce snoring may also have the benefit of reducing stress and tension related

headaches. If you're lucky, the exercises will actually relieve stress and tension!

Chewing. We've talked about needing to reduce our caloric intake and reduce weight to improve snoring, so chewing may seem counterintuitive. However, it is a great jaw muscle relaxer and can be done anywhere— with or without food or gum. The important part of the exercise is to make sure your molars are moving together and apart and that your lips are closed and touching.

The Throat

Improving the muscle tone of the throat is an absolute must for reducing the amount of snoring you do. Any time the throat experiences some blockage, snoring will occur, so the more toned the muscles of the throat are, the less likely it will be that you'll experience these issues.

Yawning. Yawning is not a sign of being tired; it's a sign that our bodies need more oxygen. Right before you yawn, your throat opens wider so that you can intake a deeper breath. Whether you need to yawn or not, you can practice yawning to improve the muscle tone in your throat. Open your mouth wide, in a big "O" shape, and draw in a breath. It's likely this will actually make you yawn, but it's not actual yawning that helps. Actually yawning tightens your throat. Repeat the exercise six to eight times to tone up your throat muscles and firm up your soft palate; this is an exercise best done right before you go to sleep because it may help keep your throat open through the night.

Singing exercises. The exercises that singers do to get their voices ready also work to improve the tone of your throat. Practice with sounds like "ah" and "ka" and "la" to exercise your throat muscles, tone your soft palate and open your throat and air passageways. Repeat the sounds 8–10 times.

Gargling. Gargle with warm water, but do it loudly. Make as much noise as you can while gargling, as this, too, will firm up the muscles in your

throat. Gargling also firms up and tones your soft palate and expands your nasal passageways.

Laughing. Put in a good comedy, read something funny...but laugh. Laughing not only firms and tones the throat and soft palate, but it also does wonders for the abdominal muscles, so do it as often as you can!

The Tongue

Tongue exercises not only strengthen the tongue so that it is not as likely to fall back into the throat, but working with the tongue also exercises the throat and the jaw. Some people who end up having surgery to relieve their snoring actually have to have a portion of their tongue removed. To hopefully avoid that, try these exercises.

Curling your tongue. Genetically predisposed or not, curling your tongue is a great strengthening exercise. Even if you cannot curl your tongue, the action of attempting to curl it works equally as well as a strength exercise.

Tongue stretching. Wherever you choose to do this exercise, make sure no one is going to think you're directing it at them. There are added benefits to this exercise: Not only does it exercise the tongue as planned, but it also exercises the inside of the throat, and as a double bonus it can firm up an unsightly double-chin or flab on the outside of the throat. The exercise is simple: Stick your tongue straight out and hold it there. Repeat eight to ten times and do the exercise a couple of times a day.

Lick your lips. Stick out your tongue as in the previous exercise, but then run it around your lips in both directions eight to ten times. Make sure you have your tongue extended as far as possible when doing this exercise. Since licking your lips repeatedly can cause them to chap, be sure to apply some kind of lip balm when you are done exercising.

Touch your nose. Very few of us can *actually* touch the nose with the tip of the tongue, but the effectiveness isn't in reaching the nose but in reaching for it. Stretch your tongue up toward your nose and hold for a few seconds. Repeat eight to ten times.

Touch your chin. Same exercise as above, only reach as low as possible with your tongue toward the tip of your chin. Unless you're related to Gene Simmons, it may not be possible to reach your chin, but the exercise will work all the same.

Tongue pushups. Hold something firm against the tip of your tongue—a spoon, a popsicle stick or tongue depressor—and push against it with your tongue, trying to push the item away from your mouth.

Snake. Flick your tongue in and out of your mouth rapidly, like a snake. Then, flick it from side to side and around in circles rapidly.

The Mouth and Lips

Exercising your mouth is another great way to firm up the muscles you use in breathing. Not only will you leave this group of exercises less likely to snore, but you should end up with a smile on your face.

Open wide. Open your mouth as widely as you can, then close and press your lips firmly together. Repeat several times.

Kiss me. Form a kiss with your lips as if you were going to kiss someone. Better yet, kiss someone...but pretending will suffice. Repeat eight to ten times and do this exercise twice a day.

Smile. Don't just smirk or grin, but break your face into a great big smile. Hold it for a few seconds and release. Repeat eight to ten times. The added benefit of the smile is that even "fake" smiles release endorphins, so this exercise will, in addition to reducing your snoring, make you happy.

Lip stretch. Without closing your mouth, stretch your lips out away from your teeth as far as you can and hold for several seconds. Repeat the exercise several times.

The Body

If your body is tense, it's likely to affect your throat and mouth as well. Tension is palpable in the shoulders and the neck; there are stretching exercises you can do for both areas to help you relax the muscles. If your snoring is caused by or exacerbated by weight issues, you'll want to place additional focus on improving your body. Even moderate exercise can help you tone up, lose weight, and become a healthier, fitter you.

Neck

The neck is a place of a lot of tension—tension that can ultimately affect your mouth and throat and hinder your ability to sleep and breathe peacefully at night. These are great exercises to do right before you go to sleep at night, and can be done while sitting on your bed.

The giraffe. Without turning or tilting your head, try to stretch your neck upward and slightly forward. You won't actually notice a lot of movement with this exercise, but you may notice a sensation of released tension after repeating the motion several times. Try not to hunch your shoulders as you stretch. Hold the stretch for several seconds if you can and repeat the exercise six to eight times.

Head tilts. Gently tip your head toward each shoulder, stretching carefully. Try to aim for your ear to touch the ball of your shoulder to elongate the stretch. Hold the stretch for several seconds and then

straighten your head. Do not try to go from one shoulder to the other, as this may cause neck strain. Move slowly and purposefully. Repeat the stretch eight to ten times.

Neck rolls. Drop your head gently until your chin is comfortably resting near your chest. Drag your chin along your chest and up toward each shoulder. As your chin approaches each shoulder, elongate the stretch by trying to touch your chin to the shoulder. You won't really be able to reach—don't hunch your shoulders or your back—but the stretching will further relax the muscles. Hold the stretch at the point where your chin is reaching for your shoulder for a few seconds. Repeat the exercise (both sides) eight to ten times.

Head turns. Sitting up straight with your shoulders squared, turn your head to the right and to the left as if you were going to look over the back of your shoulder. Don't go quite so far as to be able to look over your shoulder, as this may tense you, but turn your head far enough that your chin is in line with your shoulder. Move gently during this exercise and hold the stretches. It's not about whipping your head back and forth. Repeat the exercise eight to ten times.

Turtle. Stretch your neck forward. Picture yourself like a turtle poking its head out of its shell; that's what you're trying to accomplish with this movement. Gently hold the stretch for two or three seconds before releasing. Repeat eight to ten times.

Shoulders

The shoulders are another typical site of major muscle tension. When the shoulders are tight, it affects back and neck muscles too. Try these exercises before bed.

Shoulder rolls. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, with your feet facing forward. Pull in your abdominal muscles so that your body is solid. Lift your shoulders up and roll them back as if you were trying to make them meet behind you. Repeat the roll eight to ten times, then switch and roll your shoulders forward for the same number of repetitions.

Triceps stretches. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, with your feet facing forward. Pull in your abdominal muscles so that your body is solid. Lift your arm straight up in the air, then bend at the elbow in such a way that your lower arm runs along the back of your head and the inside of your hand is facing your neck. Use your other arm to gently apply pressure at your bended elbow to push your hand toward the middle of your back. Don't stretch further than is comfortable, but hold the stretch three to four seconds. Repeat four to six times on each side.

Duck flap. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, with your feet facing forward. Pull in your abdominal muscles so that your body is solid. Put your hands on your hips with your elbows bent and facing out. Pull your elbows back as if you were going to touch them together behind your back. Stretch comfortably, but don't strain. Hold the stretch for two to three seconds, then release. Repeat six to eight times.

Arm Stretch. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, with your feet facing forward. Pull in your abdominal muscles so that your body is solid. Hold your arms straight out in front of you. As you stretch the arms out away from your body as far as you can, gently cross your forearms to make an "X" first with one arm on top, and then the other. Hold for three to four seconds and then release. Repeat six to eight times.

Body Focus

In addition to the exercises suggested here, Pilates, yoga, and strength training are all great ways to improve flexibility, muscle tone, and stress levels. Don't leave out the necessity of regular, heart pumping aerobic activity to increase your energy, burn off those extra calories, and help you maintain a healthy weight.



Breathing



If snoring is breathing gone bad, then a stop-snoring book would be completely remiss if it did not include breathing exercises. Breathing exercises are beneficial in many ways. Not only will it help you tone the very muscles that, when flabby and un-toned, produce snores, but these exercises are also good for all-around tension relief. Deep breathing exercises actually work to lower blood pressure and heart rate; just two or three deep breaths can reduce your blood pressure a few points for hours.

Breathing is the process by which we inhale much-needed oxygen into our lungs. The oxygen flows into the bronchioles (the smallest branches of the airways in the lungs) and enters our bloodstream, where the blood cells carry it to all of the cells of the body. At the same time, the lungs are exchanging good air for waste, so that when we exhale, we remove carbon dioxide and other poisons from our body. Breathing properly is a major key to being healthy.

Since breathing supplies over 99% of your oxygen, poor breathing—including what occurs when you are snoring at night—can have adverse effects on conditions like asthma, anxiety, depression, migraines and other headaches, heart disease, concentration, blood pressure, stress, fatigue and many other health concerns.

Unfortunately, our lung function peaks in our early 20s, and it's a losing battle from thereafter. Lung capacity diminishes, the rib cage tightens and the breathing muscles lose tone, and oxygen levels in your blood and body begin to diminish.

Breathing well can have positive benefits in every area of your life; while we've included these exercises as a way to help improve your snoring, non-snorers benefit equally from improving their breathing.

The best thing about breathing exercises (unlike our tongue exercises of a few pages ago) is that they can be performed anywhere, at any time, without drawing any unwarranted attention. You can do breathing exercises at work, at home, while waiting for an appointment...your lungs are always with you!

One thing to take into consideration is that some of the breathing exercises may cause hyperventilation—bringing too much oxygen into the body at one time. When that happens, the body's natural response is to make you pass out so you'll stop bringing in oxygen for a minute. You might get dizzy! It's important that some of these exercises be done while sitting down...and if you feel yourself getting dizzy, stop for a moment, breathe regularly, and then come back to the exercise.

Peaceful breathing. Stand or sit. Relax your body and try to calm your mind. Inhale slowly through your nose while counting slowly to four. Exhale slowly through your mouth while counting to six. Hold the breath for a couple of seconds, and then let the air out steadily. You should try to exhale completely. Don't hunch your shoulders, and as you breathe in, let the air expand down into your abdomen. Repeat several times.

Belly breathing. Lay on the floor. You can use a pillow to prevent your lower back from straining. The function of breathing occurs when the diaphragm—the muscle that separates your lungs from your abdominal cavity—is drawn down and your lungs can expand. By lying on your back, you can use your hands to find the bottom of your rib cage and, as you inhale, apply light pressure on your abdomen toward the bottom of your body. Allow yourself to feel your belly expand as you draw in your breath; that's the way you draw in the fullest possible breath and expand the lungs. Belly breathing is much healthier breathing than chest breathing, where only the upper portion of the lungs is being used at full capacity. Repeat this breathing exercise for 10-15 minutes.

Reverse breathe. Sit with your back firmly upright and your shoulders squared. Exhale—before you take a breath—completely. Push as much air out of your lungs as you can. Draw in a full breath—a real belly breath. Once you feel as though you've drawn in all the air you can, force yourself to draw in slightly more air. You should feel the expansion in your belly and through your rib cage. Hold for one or two seconds, then release slowly. Pull in your abdominal muscles as tight as you can while you are exhaling. Repeat five to ten times.

Humming. Repeat the steps for the reverse breath above, however, this time, as you exhale, hum lightly. Be sure to squeeze your abdominal muscles as tightly as possible while exhaling and humming.

Short breaths. This is one of the exercises that may be more likely to cause light headedness, so be sure to stay seated while doing this exercise. To begin, sit on a chair with your spine straight and your shoulders squared. Without exhaling in between, draw in three short breaths through your nose. Hold for two to three seconds, then release and exhale through the mouth. Immediately repeat. Repeat the entire exercise four to six times. Stop if you become lightheaded.

Puffing. Puffing exhales put a bit of pressure on your lungs, making the airway stay open a bit longer. It's a great method to use if you are exercising heavily and feeling out of breath. To do this exercise, either sit or stand with your back straight. Inhale deeply, filling your lungs. As you exhale, puff your cheeks and blow the air out of your mouth through tightened, pursed lips. It should take you three to four times as long to exhale the air as it did to inhale the air. Repeat four to six times.

Waking breath. This is a great breathing exercise to do if you are feeling drowsy at work and thing you might doze off. It also exercises your diaphragm, a key muscle in the function of breathing. In this exercise, you should remain seated. You will be breathing in and out through the nose, keeping the mouth shut but not tensed. Only do the exercise for about ten seconds at a time, since it may make you lightheaded. To perform the exercise, inhale short breaths through your nose and immediately exhale

them through your nose. Repeat for ten seconds, then stop and breathe normally. Do for ten seconds out of every minute for ten minutes.

Breath Bends. This exercise will help you empty your lungs completely so that you can improve the amount of oxygen you intake. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart with your back straight and your knees relaxed. Inhale deeply. As you exhale, bend at the waist, forcing as much air out of your lungs as possible. Straighten back up as you inhale and continue to repeat four to six times or until you get too lightheaded to continue.

Relaxation

Throughout this book, we've discussed how tension creates problems with breathing and can either lead to snoring or make snoring worse. Most of the exercises throughout the book are designed not only to build muscle tone and strengthen your breathing muscles, but also to relax you so that you are breathing more naturally and sleeping more soundly.

It's important, then, to consider other forms of relaxation and relaxation exercises to promote whole-body improvement. Unfortunately, exercises—for breathing, building muscle tone or relaxation—can only do so much. You may need to actually address the stressors in your life, whether they be your job, financial problems, relationship problems, or what-have-you. Think about the things that tense you the most. Are there areas of your life in which you can make changes? Are there things you've wanted to do but haven't made the time for?

Perhaps, if you're reading this book and struggling with snoring and possibly other health concerns, now is the time for you to take action in other areas of your life as well. Write down a list of your wants and needs. Make goals for yourself about how you can meet those goals. If you have a serious crisis happening, seek professional help—counseling or professional advice—to try to improve the situation. As you now know, all of the small things that we overlook truly do have a profound impact on our health.

Relax. This exercise won't seem helpful compared to all of the other ones you've been doing, but if you had to choose just one exercise out of this whole book, I would think this might be the right one. It's a very simple exercise, but requires two very important things: your willingness to suspend your thoughts, worries, doubts, and concerns for a few minutes, and a quiet place you can be without being interrupted. It doesn't matter if that's the bathroom or if you have to escape to a park bench at your local park. You only need fifteen to twenty minutes. To do this exercise, go to your quiet, uninterrupted place. Make it as quiet and as dark as possible. Sit in a comfortable position. Try to quiet your mind—this is not a time to make to-do lists or play back the last conversation you had with your boss. For fifteen or twenty minutes, every day, just sit quietly. Give yourself those minutes of pure relaxation. Let your mind be empty and your body be relaxed. Breathe, but don't think about breathing or any other exercise. Try to let go of all of your tension. You'll love yourself for it later.

Full body relaxation. The best way to do this exercise is in bed at night. You should be lying down on your back. This exercise is commonly used in biofeedback and can have an overall positive effect on your entire body, but will certainly have an impact on your healthy breathing.

Full body relaxation requires you to specifically focus on each and every part of your body and consciously make each part relax and de-tense. It's best to start with the toes and work your way up. Spend at least ten to fifteen seconds on each area, although some stubborn areas may require much longer.

When working on full body relaxation, don't forget:

- Toes
- Feet
- Ankles
- Calves
- Knees
- Thighs
- Rear
- Hips
- Pelvis
- Waist
- Abdomen
- Lower back
- Chest
- Shoulders
- Neck
- Throat
- Chin
- Ears
- Cheeks
- Tongue

Sleeping Positions

Most people, once they fall asleep, tend to stay in the same position. If you don't have yourself in the right position before you fall asleep, you may tend to fall asleep and, unless your spouse nudges you in the middle of the night because of your snoring, you may stay in that bad position all night.

Many people watch television in bed at night before falling asleep and fall asleep while watching TV. Most likely, when you watch TV you're laying on your back, which happens to be the worst sleeping position for a snorer.

Not only does sleeping on your back drop your tongue to the back of your throat and cause blockage, but it is in that position that your air flow is most restricted in your throat, soft palate, and nostrils, too.

The best position you can sleep in at night to help prevent snoring is on your side—preferably your left side. Be sure to use a couple of pillows to keep your head elevated, but don't elevate so much that you are stressing or crimping your neck. Curl your body slightly, and make sure your knees are slightly bent and relaxed. Tuck your chin in slightly to open your breathing passageway more fully.

If you have to sleep on your back—and for some people, there is just no other way to sleep—you need to make sure you're doing everything you can to keep your airways open and relaxed. To help keep your tongue out

of the way and keep your neck relaxed, you should prop yourself up on a couple of puffy pillows. Your head should be elevated. It's also helpful to use a smaller pillow (like a travel pillow) or a rolled-up towel under your knees to keep your lower back and spine from being stressed. Doing this will help keep your whole body more relaxed, ensuring a more relaxed breathing effort.

Almost as important as the position you sleep in is the mattress and pillows you are sleeping on. If you have not replaced your mattress in quite a while, you'll be surprised to know that technology has come a long way. If you can't afford to replace your mattress, at least rotate it and flip it regularly. Replace your pillows every six months, and be sure you buy hypoallergenic, firmer pillows.

If you can afford to upgrade your mattress, think seriously about trying the new memory foam mattresses on the market. Not only do they help ensure a good night's sleep, but they are longer-lasting and form to fit your body.

Beyond Snoring

Happy-Happy, Joy-Joy. This is more than a relaxation exercise. It's a change-of-attitude exercise. It's about the power of positive thinking, about improving your own outlook and empowering yourself. I know, you just wanted to learn how to stop snoring, but it's obvious that in most cases (unless you suffer from sleep apnea or another disorder) that most snoring is caused by related physical conditions that are closely associated to stress and tension. So, yes, a change-of-attitude exercise is wholly appropriate to a book about snoring.

This exercise is ongoing. It's not something you do for a few minutes each day, although it may take you time to build up to the point where it's a lifelong habit. This exercise can be done anywhere—and should be done as often as possible.

This exercise is about *exorcising* negativity. It's about changing the way you think and feel about yourself and the world around you. I know, it feels sometimes like there is a lot to be negative about. You can turn on the news any day of the week and hear about death and destruction, about hopelessness and sadness.

BUT

(You knew that was coming, didn't you?) You don't have to get sucked in to living a negative life. In fact, there's an easy way to break the habit. Every time you catch yourself thinking something negative—about

yourself, someone else, the world in general—stop your negative thought and replace it with a positive one. If you're checking out at the grocery store and the clerk is rude, you might think to yourself, "That guy is a jerk!" STOP! Find something positive to think instead. That guy is employed. That guy has nice hair. Something.

It's important to do this when you have negative thoughts about others, but it is critical that you do it when you have negative thoughts about yourself, particularly if you use the word never, as in, "I'm never going to get that job." NO WAY can you let something that negative get by. Immediately, for this exercise to be successful, you need to grab yourself by the shoulders and say, "Of course I can get that job!! I can do anything I want to do!"

I know, it seems foolish, but it is really remarkably effective. Over time, you'll understand why the exercise is called "Happy-Happy, Joy-Joy." The more you change your negative thoughts to positive ones, the happier and more joyful you will feel...and the more energy you will have...and the less stress you will have...and the less tension you will have...and the easier breathing will be...and one day, you'll wake up and realize you didn't snore the night before.

Spread the wealth. To really capitalize on the previous exercise, start spreading your positive feelings around. You know the "pay it forward" concept...well, be the one who starts the payment process. That cashier you thought was a jerk? Smile at him. Say thank you. Tell him to have a nice night. Try doing something or saying something nice to one stranger each day. You will be amazed at the results.

Reach for the stars. Finally, spend some time reaching for more. Everyone has dreams, whether it's to own that hot-rod motorcycle you dreamed of in your youth or to try out for American Idol. Do something to reach for your dream. Start a savings fund for your motorcycle. Take singing lessons or join a community choir. Make a list of the things you want to do, pick one, and do it. Maybe you just haven't taken the time to get lost in a good mystery novel lately, or maybe you've always wanted to get a massage. Pick one thing and do it. This exercise needs to be repeated often...some things you can do daily, some monthly. Some will be those once-in-a-lifetime things, but those deserve to be on the list too.

Communicate. If you have a spouse or life partner, talk to them. If you don't, talk to a close friend—but you need to communicate. Reach out, make connections. Talk to your spouse about your dreams. Make some goals together. (Start a fund for that beach house or that over-due honeymoon trip!) Healthy, happy people work hard at having friends and close connections. It's important to have people to talk to; if you don't then it's probably time to find a hobby or interest that allows you to connect with and meet new people.

Don't go to bed angry. One of the worst things a snorer can do is go to bed angry. If you've had a fight with your spouse or a bad day at work, use some of the exercises in this book to relax yourself before you go to bed. When you go to bed angry, your body is tense and tight. No matter where the tension is—your neck, your shoulders, your gut—it will affect your jaw and throat. You'll become very tight and your airways will be constricted. You'll snore.

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