

Device puts the squeeze on disruptive snorers

By Melissa Mixon, USA TODAY*

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Susan Hannah of San Diego says she was getting desperate. Her husband, Tom, no longer was sharing their bedroom, and he was starting to resent her.



The two small sterling silver points on the ring apply light pressure to accupressure points on the pinkie finger.

By Leslie Smith Jr., USA TODAY

The Hannahs didn't need a marriage counselor. They needed a cure for Susan's snoring. "It's kind of embarrassing to admit," she says. "Snoring is not a sexy attribute."

Hannah — one of about 90 million American adults who snore, according to the National Sleep Foundation — turned to the Internet for treatments.

There are many to choose from. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office lists 852 patented anti-snoring devices, from medical masks to nose strips.

Hannah, 56, chose a ring. Each night for a year she has slipped the Anti-Snor Therapeutic Ring on her left pinkie finger, and *voilà* no more snoring.

The makers of the ring say it applies acupressure to points in the pinkie finger that alter the flow of energy known in Eastern medicine as chi. "I'm devoted to it," Hannah says.

After a few jabs from his wife, Ron Goldstein, 67, of Scottsdale, Ariz., says he'd go sleep in another room. He tried laser treatments to his throat, nasal strips and a bracelet that gave him a little shock when he snored. They all failed, he says, but the ring works.

"When I put it on, for whatever reason, I feel like I've slept better," he says.

Others are not so impressed. "Not any one (snoring treatment) works perfectly," says Nancy Collop, medical director of the John Hopkins Sleep Disorders Center in Baltimore.

People snore when the 26 muscles in their throat relax during sleep, she explains. This causes a narrowing in the throat as flaccid tissues rest closer together. When air passes, these tissues vibrate, resulting in a snore.

"I won't say (the ring) can't work," Collop says, "but I am pretty skeptical."

John Woodley, 37, a jeweler from Australia, created the ring in an attempt to find pain relief. He had been in a car accident and had read that pain can be eased by acupressure applied to the heart meridian in the pinkie of the left hand.

The ring did nothing for pain, but it silenced snoring, he says.

Since the \$45 ring was first distributed in 2002, Woodley says, 140,000 have been sold in Australia and Japan. The ring is now available in the USA at www.snorenomore.net.

To rule out sleep apnea, which causes a person to stop breathing, anyone with "socially disruptive snoring" should consult a doctor, says Pete Michaelson of the Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio, an ear, nose and throat surgeon.

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