

Crash Course

Trouble sleeping? Feeling tired? Check these bedroom trouble spots.

LIGHT

If you can see your hand after the lights are turned off, your bedroom is too light. Streetlights, nightlights and appliances can produce enough light to disrupt the production of melatonin, the hormone that helps regulate the sleep cycle, causing effects similar to jet lag.

■ **FIX IT:** Move or cover light sources. If streetlights invade your bedroom, install light-blocking drapes. Also limit light exposure before bedtime. Being surrounded by electric light in the evening—even checking e-mail before bed—can reset your biological clock and make falling asleep difficult.

TEMPERATURE

Heating the bedroom in cold weather isn't just a waste of energy; it also messes with your sleep.

■ **FIX IT:** A temperature of 65 degrees is ideal for sleep. Keep warm with a comforter or blankets that retain body heat.

NOISE

Sudden loud noises can awaken you, and even passing traffic can fragment sleep.

■ **FIX IT:** Sleep as far as possible from the street and noisy appliances. Mask other sounds with earplugs, a "white noise" generator or a fan.

VISUAL NOISE

Clutter, visual distractions, stimulating colors, bright lights and TV can all distract sleepers.

■ **FIX IT:** Paint your walls soothing colors such as lavender, blue or light green, and remove everything nonessential from your nightstand.

—CAROL VENOLIA

Master the Mighty Mite

Mattresses and bedding are hospitable homes for dust mites, microscopic relatives of spiders and ticks that thrive in warm, humid places—and a common cause of allergies and asthma. A single mattress may contain up to 2 million of the scavengers, which feed on our dead skin.

KEEP DUST MITES AWAY:

1 Wash bedding weekly (water temperature above 130 degrees kills dust mites; cold-water washing removes about 90 percent of mites). To kill mites before laundering, soak sheets for 30 minutes in a solution of 1 part dishwashing liquid and 4 parts eucalyptus oil, then wash as usual.

2 Air bedding daily for at least 20 minutes and vacuum mattresses regularly.

3 Keep the area under the bed clean and clutter-free.

Shui that Feng

If you're not sleeping well, check the position of your bed, which may be a source of distress. Consider rearranging if your bed is:

- Over the garage or entry.
- Near a fuse box or other electrical source.
- Aligned with doorways.

A Fume-Free 40 Winks

Your bed should be comfortable, relaxing and supportive, and it shouldn't expose you to toxic fumes. A mattress is close to your face for eight hours a night, so one made of healthy materials such as organic cotton, natural latex or wool is a smart investment.

NATURAL MATTRESSES

The Clean Bedroom
www.thecleanbedroom.com

CozyPure
www.cozypure.com

Earthsake
www.earthsake.com

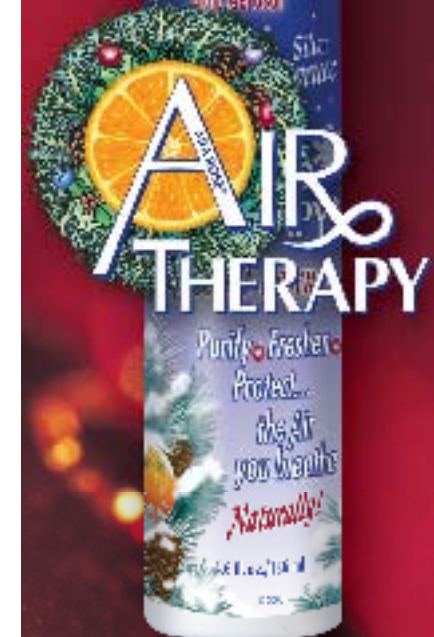
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Savvy Rest
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www.shepherdsdream.com

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