

Research trial into snoring brings new hope for sufferers

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

The solution to the age old problem of snoring has been right under our noses all along: if you want a decent night's sleep then sing for it.

The results of a clinical trial carried out by researchers in Devon show that certain singing exercises help reduce [snoring](#) in people with a history

of simple snoring or obstructive [sleep apnoea](#) (OSA).

The research has been published in the *International Journal of Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery*, an open-access journal.

The singing exercises help to strengthen the [throat muscles](#). Weak muscles in the [soft palate](#) and upper throat can be a cause of snoring and OSA – and serious singers use singing exercises to strengthen these muscles.

Malcolm Hilton, consultant [otolaryngologist](#) at the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust and Sub Dean of the University of Exeter Medical School, began the trial after being contacted by a singing teacher, Alise Ojay, with a quirky idea.

He said: "Alise told me that one of her pupils had said that, since starting to sing, his snoring had become greatly reduced. So, she devised a singing exercise programme to strengthen the throat muscles. I then set up this trial and the results have been really interesting."

Mr Hilton's trial involved 60 patients who were chronic snorers, and 60 patients with mild to moderate sleep apnoea. Half of each group sang the exercises for three months and half had no intervention. At the end of the trial the group which did the exercises improved significantly on ratings of snoring and sleep quality, while the comparison group did not change.

Mr Hilton said: "I was open-minded about it. I had no expectations but it was an interesting concept. There is not already a quick-fix treatment for snoring. It is a condition where, if you could find a non-[invasive treatment](#), that would be very beneficial.

"The conclusion that we came to was that the three-month programme of

daily singing exercises reduced the frequency and severity of snoring, and improved overall quality of sleep. The exercises were easy to perform and two thirds of people were able to complete the three month programme doing the exercises most days.

"It opens up a whole new avenue of potential treatment which avoids surgery, so it is definitely good news for snorers. However, it must be used in conjunction with lifestyle changes. Being overweight, for example, is the biggest, single independent predictor of snoring."

He added: "Millions of people are affected by snoring and OSA.

"Snoring might not be life threatening, but it can be enormously disruptive to people's lives and snorers often seek medical help.

"OSA can be much more serious, causing people to stop breathing temporarily during deep sleep, which can have a devastating effect on sleep quality. It is also believed that OSA may contribute to road accidents and hypertension."

Provided by University of Exeter

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