

# Can an app save your marriage?

Sick of her husband's snoring driving them to separate beds, author Christina Hopkinson tried a new app to see if it might help



**My husband and I are rubbish in bed. Well, no, we're fine there, thank you. I'm talking about the actual sleeping bit of sleeping together. In short, he snores. Loudly. On a recent weekend away with three other families, all the wives said that they'd felt the earth move, due to the floor-rattling volume of his snores.**

All too often, we wake up apart after his exile to the office. But I don't want us to be like some ancient king and queen with their separate sleeping quarters. I want us to be able to cohabit at night as happily as we do by day.

Luckily, these days there is an app for everything, including problems with snoring. At first, I was sceptical. I had visions of my husband having to go to sleep with an iPhone up his nose, but it turns out that SnoreLab is not so much a cure for snoring as an analysis to help sufferers find their own solution.

For the princely sum of £2.49, I downloaded it from iTunes, figuring it was cheaper than divorce. To use it, you have to leave your iPhone or iPad face down near the dormant, ahem, guinea pig. The next day, it generates a chart of the night's snoring, recording some sound samples of the worst excesses, measuring the intensity and showing whether lifestyle factors, such as drinking or a cold, affected the night's noises.

**If that earth-quaking, wife-waking snorting is mild, what would "epic" be like?**

The first morning we checked, expecting dramatic results. But to my surprise, the app told us that he only snores for about a quarter of the night and, in terms of volume, never higher than a "Snore Score" of 18 out of a hundred, which is judged to be "mild". Well, if that earth-quaking, wife-waking snorting snuffle is mild, what on earth would "epic" sound like?

Maybe it was an aberration. The next night, he managed to push up his score to 20, but the following night, it plunged to a mere 9. We had a "high" of 26, following a heavy day's drinking, but other than that, it seemed he was a fairly average snorer.

I began to wonder if the problem wasn't him, but my intolerance. Maybe I need a NagLab app to sort out my meanness?

Then we played back the recordings of Alex's average snores to a few friends and everyone fell off their chairs. That's when I realised there might be a flaw in the app – presumably only those with a snoring problem will use it, which means surely the results will be skewed very high.

The app suggests various remedies, from the extreme (a mask connected to an oxygen pump) to the mundane (nasal sprays and strips, or essential oils). I started off with a cheap over-the-counter spray and found it made no difference. My friend, a qualified herbalist, gave me some fennel oil, but that didn't help either.

One thing we noticed really made a difference was him drinking less. But

somehow I knew that wasn't going to be a workable solution, and a mouthpiece that makes him look like Hannibal Lector is a bit of a last resort, so I looked to the app for some more homemade options.

A few nights in, we realised he snores most when he's lying on his front (unusual – for most people it's their back). The app suggested sticking a pillow between his legs and taping a tennis ball to his front to force him to sleep on his side. That night Alex – who is nothing if not game – let me Sellotape a Slazenger Wimbledon Ball to the front of the T-shirt he sleeps in.

We expected a funny story; we got an all-time low of three on the Snore Score. We tried it the next night and the night after that, and it was no fluke. Every night spent sleeping on his side led to marital harmony in the bedroom.

**THE VERDICT?** The combination of high-tech and low-tech, app and tennis ball, cured his snoring almost overnight. He still thinks we should get something for my intolerance, though.

## NEED MORE HELP?

**Being even a bit overweight, having a drink in the evening, sleeping on your back, smoking and a blocked nose all make snoring more likely. Can't get your partner to slim down or give up wine? Try nasal strips to encourage breathing from the nose, rather than mouth, throat sprays to help airflow, or mandibular advancement devices, which reposition the jaw. For more, see [britishsnoring.co.uk](http://britishsnoring.co.uk).**