


**MAG RUFFMAN
DIY**


Off the sleep end!

Instant relief from congestion and night sweats

This is a mid-life quiz. Check all that apply. If you score higher than 5, you've hit mid-life. If you score higher than 10, you've hit it hard.

- You sleep with someone who snores, has sleep apnea or sinus congestion.

- His or her congested breathing causes them to emit short, sharp snorts.

- You wake up every time he or she snorts louder than 70 decibels.

- Which is often. And deafening.

- Mid-life hormones wake you up at least once per night, drenched.

- You get up, stand on the icy bathroom tiles and blow-dry your body.

- You go back to bed and thrash around trying to find a dry spot.

- The snorter awakes, somewhat irritated.

- The only dry spot left in the bed is right next to the snorter, so you make your move.

- The closer you get, the more irritated and restless the snorter becomes.

- It's too darn hot when you're

snuggling and the perspiration starts to flow again.

- You back off to your original spot, organize the pillows around your ears to reduce snorting volume and thrust out a bare leg to moderate body temperature. Sometimes both of you go back to sleep. Not often.

Up until one month ago, I had not slept well in years for *all* of the above reasons.

But on Valentine's Day I received the gift of a new kind of bedding, and I've now had more than 30 nights in a row of solid 8-hour, deep, restful sleep. No perspiring. No snorting. Both of us wake refreshed each morning and have lots of energy, and neither of us is ever too loud, too hot or too sweaty (except under the right circumstances).

It's some kind of miracle.

I was so excited by the vast improvement in our sleep that I tracked down the creator of my new SmartSilk bedding. I reached Harry Walker in his Montreal office. He listened to my torrent of enthusiasm and questions with the patient

ear of someone who is getting a lot of sleep.

How had he come up with the silk-filled bedding that eliminated our night sweats, wakefulness and breathing problems the very first night we put it on our bed?

Harry explained that a few years ago his wife was menopausal and going crazy with sleep disturbances from night sweats. She'd bought the finest "breathable" down products for their bed but still woke every night in a froth of perspiration.

Harry, who'd spent years working in Montreal's garment industry, knew a thing or two about the wicking properties of silk. He thought it might make an effective solution for his wife, so he developed a prototype silk-filled duvet, mattress cover and pillow protector. They worked beautifully for his wife, so here he is, three years later, finally launching a much-tested, successfully proven new product that has just been awarded the Asthma and Allergy Friendly certification (www.asthmafriendly.com).

But how does SmartSilk diminish the scourge of night sweats?

Silk is a thermal regulator. Unlike down and some synthetics, which tend to collect and store moisture and heat, silk wicks humidity away from the skin's surface and dissipates extra heat. SmartSilk products feature silk batting within a shell of pure cotton. It's machine washable (cool delicate wash cycle, low tumble dry) and its benefits are clinically proven to improve after washing.

According to Harry, my delighted relief is typical. "It's different for everybody," he says. "Some people still get warm surges, but they're not soaked anymore. Other people have complete freedom from night sweats and sleep soundly through the night."

And lots of sleepers experience dramatic relief from breathing problems. "My cousin has a deviated septum in his nose," reports Harry, "so he had trouble breathing at night. He wondered if SmartSilk would help his stuffy nose. I told him surgery might be a better

option, but he insisted on trying it. As soon as he spent his first night in the SmartSilk bedding, he came back and told me that it had really reduced his congestion."

When you consider that you spend a third of your life sleeping (or trying to), you might see this solution as an investment in your lifetime productivity level. I sure do.

SmartSilk products are guaranteed from manufacturer's defects for five years post-purchase. A SmartSilk queen-size mattress cover, duvet and two pillow protectors run about \$700 with tax. Shipping is free for orders over \$150.

TIP: The cost of Chinese silk has escalated wildly, so you might want to order before prices increase (www.smartsilk.com).

BONUS TIP: For fresh tidbits about the fascinating symptoms of perimenopause, visit the Red Hot Mamas (www.redhotmamas.org).

Questions? Visit Mag Ruffman online at www.toolgirl.com or send an email to mag@toolgirl.com.