



Health Benefits

Play the didge each day - keep snoring at bay! Didgeridoos can help with sleep problems

I read a lot about how playing the didgeridoo can help with sleep disorders. Then I realised I no longer wake people up with my snoring, in fact since starting to play the didje I have not had a single complaint!

When finding out about this subject I read many websites, much of the information misleading and longwinded. Below are the most relevant and usefull articles I found, with reference to the original site, and links for further reading.

BBC News Article

Didgeridoo 'Helps sleep problems'

Daily playing of a didgeridoo can help alleviate sleep problems, a study says.

Swiss researchers found using the instrument for 25 minutes a day helped people with sleep apnoea, the British Medical Journal reported.

The disorder causes the throat to close and breathing to stop, waking the patient, but the sessions helped by strengthening the airways.

UK experts said such exercising of the airways was known to help.

About 5% of the population has the syndrome, which can cause people to wake up regularly during the night, and common advice from doctors is to lose weight.

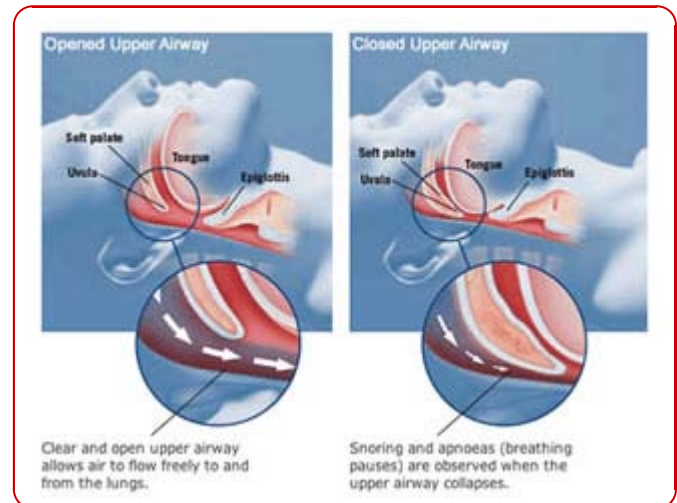
But the team, from the Zuercher Hoehenklinik Wald hospital, decided to investigate whether playing the Aboriginal wind instrument helped patients after hearing reports that it had solved some sleep-related problems.

The team identified 25 people with sleep apnoea and split them into two groups - one which was given daily lessons for four months, while the other was kept on a waiting list for lessons.

Patients who had lessons reported less sleepiness during the day and their partners said there were less disturbances. Lead researcher Otto Braendli said larger trials were needed to confirm the findings, but said the study offered hope. "Our results are the first to show that training the upper airways significantly improves sleep related outcomes."

University of Surrey sleep expert Neil Stanley said: "Exercising the airways in such a way is known to help people with this condition. There have been reports that people who have done singing have benefited in a similar way. However, most doctors would advise people to lose weight."

BBC article link: news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4552368.stm



BMJ (British medical Journal) 4th February 2006

Didgeridoo playing could improve sleep apnoea

Regularly playing a didgeridoo reduces daytime sleepiness and snoring in people with moderate obstructive sleep apnoea syndrome. In a randomised controlled trial, Puhan and colleagues allocated

25 adults with self reported snoring and an apnoea-hypopnoea index of 15-30 (episodes per hour) either to didgeridoo lessons and regular practice at home or to a waiting list. After four months the intervention group had less daytime sleepiness and significant improvement in the index score. The collapsibility of the upper airways must have decreased through the "training," say the authors.

BMJ article link: www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/332/7536/0-a

Full text article: www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/332/7536/266

NHS - Sleep Apnoea

Sleep apnoea

Introduction

Obstructive sleep apnoea-hypopnoea syndrome (OSAHS) is a sleep disorder in which a person has irregular breathing at night and is excessively sleepy during the day.

In sleep apnoea, the upper airway (pharynx) collapses repeatedly, at irregular intervals, during sleep. Apnoea is when the airway collapses and is blocked completely, cutting off the flow of air. Hypopnoea occurs when the collapse is only partial. The airway is reduced and the person will experience hypoventilation (inadequate breathing).

The pause in breathing, or period of very restricted breathing, is usually defined as about 10 seconds, although it varies from person to person. The frequency of apnoea or hypopnoea is used to assess the severity of this condition. The number of times that the apnoea occurs in an hour is called the apnoea/hypopnoea index (AHI) or the respiratory disturbance index (RDI). An AHI of between 5 and 14 in an hour is mild sleep apnoea. Between 15 and 30 is moderate. More than 30 in an hour is severe that means at least one every two minutes.

As people with sleep apnoea fall asleep, the muscles in their airway relax. The collapsing of the airway (pharynx) causes people to come out of deep sleep and either wake momentarily or sleep lightly, as they are trying to breathe more deeply. The person soon resumes deep sleep, and the cycle begins again. The period of wakefulness is so brief that even though it may happen hundreds of times a night, the person usually won't remember waking up.

Sleep apnoea affects around one in 100 people. Overweight men between the ages of 30 and 65 are most commonly affected, but it may also occur in children with enlarged tonsils or adenoids.

NHS Direct article: www.nhs.uk/conditions/sleep-apnoea/Pages/Introduction.aspx

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