

Hotel guests lose sleep over snoring, other noises

By Charisse Jones, USA TODAY

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When Sharon Kirkwood walks into a hotel room, often the first thing she does is listen.

It's not a raucous party down the hall that she's tuning into. "It's the mechanical type sounds that drive me crazy — the ruckety sound the heat/air conditioning (unit) makes, the buzzing of certain types of light fixtures," says Kirkwood of Farmington Hills, Mich., who works in consumer sales. When it's just too noisy, Kirkwood says, she'll summon hotel staff and pose the

question: "Could you sleep in this room?"

For corporate trekkers who need a good night's rest to propel them through on-the-road meetings and presentations, noisy hotel rooms can be the bane of their business trips. Noise was the top hotel complaint cited by respondents in a 2011 J.D. Power and Associates North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Index Study. It beat out smelly rooms, sluggish Web connections and rude staff.

"It can certainly hurt satisfaction, there's no doubt," says Stuart Greif, J.D. Power's vice president of global travel. Even the snoring guest next door can be a problem — so much so that [Crowne Plaza](#) has snore monitors patrolling hallways at some of its British hotels, and is trying out snore-absorption rooms in properties throughout Europe.

"One complaint we receive regularly from guests is of excessive snoring from adjacent rooms," says Florence Eavis, a spokeswoman for [IHG](#), which owns the Crowne Plaza brand. Crowne Plaza began deploying snoring monitors in June. "The use of a snore monitor, who patrols the hotel's quiet zones to ensure guests remain undisturbed, is an easy and effective way of ensuring our guests can sleep easy," Eavis says. If the patroler thinks a guest is too loud, they'll ask the front desk to contact the room and give solutions for toning down the noise, such as bath products with soothing scents for a snorer. The monitor might also "knock on the door ... as an absolute last resort." Eavis says.

Did you hear that?

Snore monitors aren't currently headed to the U.S., Eavis says. "However," she says, "if there is significant customer demand, it is something we may look into as the comfort of our guests during their stay is our top priority."

The chain also is trying out snore-absorption rooms in Britain, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Belgium and Netherlands. They're designed to help those sharing a room with a snorer get a better night's rest.

"We know that snoring can be a real problem between couples," Eavis says. Snoring is just one of the irritating sounds hotel guests have to contend with. Slamming doors, chattering hotel staff, amorous couples next door, revving truck engines in the parking lot and leaking toilets are among the irritants that some of USA TODAY's Road Warriors say keep them awake.

"No question," says Drew Guenett, an automotive consultant who lives in Scottsdale Ariz., it's "slamming doors." He's resorted to rolling a towel and sticking it at the bottom of his door to block out noise and light. "Is it that hard to just close the door?" he asks.

Jerry Quintiliani, a regional sales manager who lives in Peoria, Ill., is bothered by sounds of a different sort. "The worst for me," he says, "is getting a room under the guy with [Herman Munster](#) feet, clomping all night."

Rebecca Carranza, an educational publisher living in [Lake Barrington](#), Ill., says, "The most annoying is when I have had a sleepless night in a hotel and the housekeeping (or) engineering staff starts yelling and bantering in the hall an hour before I have to get up. This happens more and more often."

There's the obvious racket, says Jeff MacMillan, a consulting engineer based in [Big Sky](#), Mont., and then there are "the annoying little noises," like a "running toilet (or) dripping faucet."

"It seems the better the hotel, the more quiet the rooms, or at least the more responsive to silencing the noise," MacMillan says. "You get what you pay for."

Home remedies on the road

Many USA TODAY Road Warriors, business travelers who combined rack up millions of miles on the road each year, say they're quick to report a problem to hotel staff. Many also have remedies of their own, ranging from ear plugs to reserving corner rooms on a top floor and unplugging refrigerators.

Denise Travers, a market research field interviewer who lives in Tampa, says "those (air conditioning and heating) units under the windows should be banned. The only thing you can do about those is move. I did recently have a mini-fridge with a very noisy fan. I wrapped it in a thick blanket."

[John Paul](#), a non-profit group consultant who lives in Dallas, uses an iPhone app called "White Noise" that features jungle, beach or rain shower sounds to help tune out annoyances. Also, he says, "I request a room far from ice machines and elevators."

Just join the party

Greif of J.D. Power says it's best if guests aren't disturbed by noise to begin with. But if they are, a speedy and appropriate response by the hotel is critical. "You'll not always be able to make everybody happy," he says, "but making an effort and doing everything you possibly can, that goes a long way."

Rob Newman, a TV commercial producer from [Los Angeles](#), has perhaps the ultimate solution to that loud party that's within earshot. He devised it after having his rest interrupted by Friday night raves that take place next door to the Thai hotel that he visits each year.

"I try to put a pillow over my head — but the bass vibrates right through you," Newman says. "So what do I ultimately do? I finally surrender. I get dressed at 5 a.m., get my flashlight and go through the jungle until I get to the rave. If you can't beat 'em, join in."

[http://travel.usatoday.com/hotels/story/2011-10-03/Snoring-running-toilets-parties-among-top-hotel-
nuisances/50646700/1](http://travel.usatoday.com/hotels/story/2011-10-03/Snoring-running-toilets-parties-among-top-hotel-nuisances/50646700/1)