

USC Center for Work & Family Life

Relationships & Sleep

Sleeping together is an important way for couples to feel connected to one another. While many partners can live happily together, they just can't sleep well side by side. Research from the Better Sleep Council (BSC) found that on average, one in three Americans report that their partner's sleep problems negatively impact their own quality of sleep. If your partner's sleep style has you headed for a separate room, here are some tips that just might bring harmony back to the bedroom and into your relationship.

◆ **Problem: Your partner kicks in his or her sleep, waking you up.**

Solution: Make sure your bed gives each person adequate sleep surface. If you are sharing a double (full-size) mattress this may not give each person enough room. Couples should share a mattress no smaller than queen-size.

◆ **Problem: Your partner likes it hot, but you like it cool.**

Solution: Temperature is a major issue in many relationships. Ideally, your bedroom should be a cool 60–65 degrees Fahrenheit. But a few simple adjustments can make it possible for a person who craves heat and a person who craves cool to sleep side by side comfortably.

- Double fold the blankets so there is more coverage on one side.
- Invest in a dual-control electric blanket, or a twin-size electric blanket for one side.

◆ **Problem: Your partner snores, keeping you up at night.**

Solution: Snoring can be a serious health concern, so make sure to consult your physician. If your partner's snoring is not a serious health condition, try alternative treatments like investing in anti-snore pillows, sprays or nasal strips that are designed to help people breathe more easily. If your partner's snoring persists, try foam earplugs before you try a different room.

◆ **Problem: Your partner tosses and turns.**

Solution: It may be your mattress. If your mattress is uncomfortable, it can lead to restless sleep. Mattresses should be evaluated every five to seven years for comfort and support.

◆ **Problem: Your partner loves to cuddle, but you like your space while you sleep.**

Solution: Compromise. Before falling asleep spend some time snuggling together and then agree to sleep apart.

◆ **Problem: Your sleep schedules don't match.**

Solution: Try finding a bedtime that works for both of you. If your partner turns in early and you're a night owl, try reading a book with a personal book lamp until you're ready to nod off. If you're an early riser compared to your sleep partner, be considerate in the early morning. Keep overhead lights off and use minimal lighting while your partner is sleeping.

◆ **Problem: Your bedroom feels more like an office than a place to sleep.**

Solution: Your bedroom should only be used for sleep and sex. Keep work, laptops, PDAs and televisions out of the bedroom. This creates a much more relaxing and romantic atmosphere, and will give you both a better night's sleep.

For more information feel free to call CWFL at (213) 821-0800 or visit www.usc.edu/worklife