

PASSIONS

TIME
WELL SPENT

LUXURY

BEAUTY SLEEP

In a nonstop world, bed might be the ultimate luxury. **By Lindsey Tramuta**

HERE'S A DISCONCERTING FACT: The developed world's severe sleep deficiency is officially a public health epidemic, according to the World Health Organization. You may roll your eyes at the gospel of eight hours of shut-eye as a good, restorative night's sleep, but if you're like the majority of the world's population >>

▷▷ and regularly clock six or fewer hours a night, your health is in jeopardy. Lack of sleep increases the risk of obesity, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, and mood and mental disorders.

"Our lack of sleep is a slow form of self-euthanasia," claims sleep scientist Matthew Walker, director of the Center for Human Sleep Science at the University of California at Berkeley, in his eye-opening book *Why We Sleep*.

That sleep has become an elusive luxury is entirely of our own making. Modern society glorifies busyness, long hours, and early rising as badges of honor. As a result, much of the world population has adjusted to an "underslept" (and thus, underperforming) state of functioning.

"If a quarter of our lives is spent lying down on a bed, why aren't we devoting more time and resources to getting that part right?" That's the rhetorical question posed by Alistair Hughes, managing director of the U.K.-based luxury mattress firm Savoir Beds. "People often look to pills before they even consider their setup at home," Hughes adds.

Hughes's company, whose mattresses are made by skilled craftsmen and -women from premium materials like horsetail hair, and retail from \$10,500 to \$125,000 each, began making beds for the high-profile clientele of the Savoy hotel in London in 1905. (The highly customized beds went on to win over Frank Sinatra, Liza Minnelli, Madonna, and Emma Thompson.)

Hughes's mattresses may not have integrated sleep trackers or sensors to nudge a client who snores, innovations that online smart-mattress brands like Casper and Purple are working to develop, but he stands by the strength in 100 years of artisanal know-how.

Of course one doesn't have to spend five figures to sleep well, and technological innovation in the area of sleep is red-hot. (With \$30 billion spent on over-the-counter and prescription sleep aids every year in the U.S. alone, it's no wonder.)

Unveiled at the Consumer Electronics Show in January, Aromarest is designed to both ease users into restful sleep and help them awake feeling refreshed through the use of color, sound, and scent. The app-controlled device, a sort of three-in-one bedside lamp, changes colors (warm tones help stimulate melatonin



A Savoir Beds mattress is "tufted" (top) to prevent the filling from moving; a craftsman fills the mattress with South American horsetail hair (bottom).

**\$411
BILLION**

**THE ANNUAL
COST OF SLEEP
DEPRIVATION TO
THE U.S. ECONOMY**

SOURCE: RAND Europe

secretion), emits various sounds (white noise for night, energizing tunes for morning), and diffuses aromatherapy.

In a similar vein, Dreem, a \$500 ergonomic headband, works with electroencephalography sensors to monitor brain waves, heart rate, and breathing during sleep. It also uses bone-conduction technology to play sounds to help its users fall asleep, stay asleep, and wake up, without requiring a Wi-Fi or Bluetooth connection. An app provides a detailed analysis of sleep patterns with personalized recommendations.

Then there's the Lumos Smart Sleep Mask, which uses light-flash technology developed by researchers at Stanford University to regulate a user's circadian rhythm across time zones and combat jet lag.

Still, there are no miracle solutions. Even the best bed and the most innovative wearable can't replace the self-discipline Walker insists is fundamental on the road to healthful sleep: Get to bed and wake up at the same time of day—no matter what—every day of the year. ■