

Having trouble with sleeping well? Waking up tired? Rest easy...All you probably need is a better pillow.

by Kim Renton

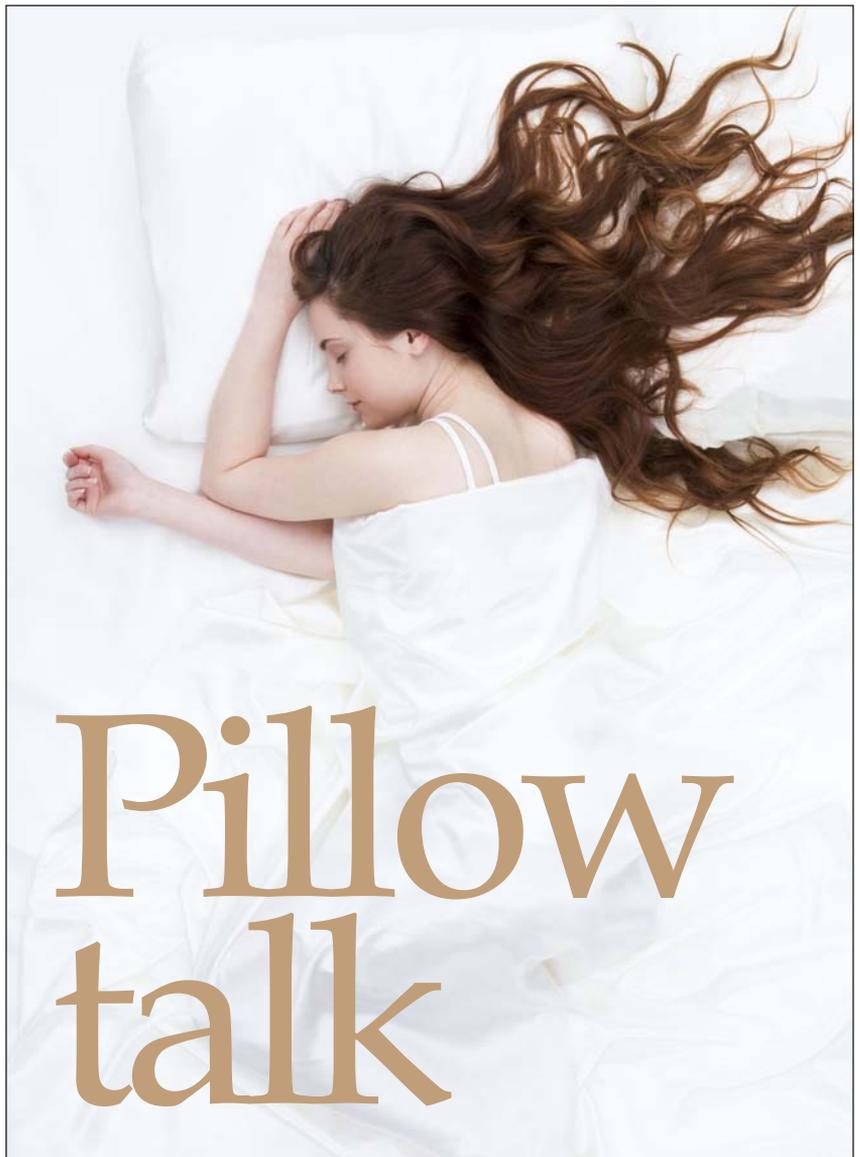
THE "pillow" dates back to as early as 7500 BC. With our ancestors living only half of our current lifespan back then, the pillow was designed as a necessity for pest control rather than to provide the bodily regeneration via a good night's sleep that we seek today.

This early pillow was designed to elevate the user's head in order to keep bugs from crawling in the sleeper's hair, ears and mouth, and often constructed from stone or wood. "Comfort" took the back seat to the crucial service this crude version of a pillow provided.

In other parts of the world, the Japanese believed that a soft pillow sucked energy from the user's body while sleeping, making ceramic the material of choice for pillows. Today, a wellness expert would likely read between those lines and note that a soft pillow was not "sucking out life," but merely was not providing any neck support, therefore compromising the user's alignment. This would result in the sleeper waking up feeling less than optimally rested.

The Geisha often had elaborately decorated ceramic pillows that lifted them off the bed to keep the user on their back and their hair off the bed.

The Asian and Egyptian desire for a hard pillow was not the same in Europe. European pillows were similar to what we know today as a standard pillow; however, rather than being stuffed with poly fibre or Down, the pillows were stuffed with rags or straw and their purpose was merely comfort. Comfort was a desire only afforded to the rich so having a pillow was a status symbol for those that had them and often went into wills or were passed on as bequests.



By the time of the Industrial Revolution and growing American wealth, US companies began mass-producing pillows. The primary benefit being offered was comfort and suddenly pillows were no longer just for the very wealthy.

Over the last 25 years, the pillow has become specialized. The inexpensive standard stuffed pillow, which lacks any therapeutic benefit, now competes with the moulded ergonomic neck pillow. Offering better neck support, these specialty pillows are becoming a basic necessity as today's chiropractors and other wellness specialists are busy correcting mal-alignments caused by everyday occupational occurrences such as long hours at a computer or leaning over a client to provide services from pedi-

cures to surgery. The unnatural "forward leaning" of an average eight- to 12 pound head on the vertebrae that are supposed to be stacked in precise balance, one on top of the other, can be debilitating.

From headaches and neck pain to numbness and tingling radiating down an arm, reaching for an analgesic merely treats the symptoms but ignores the underlying problem and cause. If your pillow is not supporting you for the eight or so hours of down time your body depends on for rejuvenation while you sleep, you can expect to further assault your neck and back. Going to the chiropractor for treatment of the problem is not enough if you continue to have the same "forward leaning" positioning day after day. Hardly surprising that an increasing number of consumers

are looking for more than “just a pillow”. So what should one look for in the perfect pillow?

Proper neck support. If you have a neck support pillow that is too high or too low for you, you will not be in proper spinal alignment. Few people are aware of the fact that when your neck muscles lack neck support they also lack the ability to relax which can prolong your ability to surrender to sleep.

Comfortable. High quality memory foam pillows are the best to induce good sleep; they allow your head to feel weightless as it is enveloped into the pillow. A Turkish study published by the Scandinavian Journal of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery shows that a regular bed pillow puts pressure on your skin, which reduces circulation and breaks down collagen.

Hypoallergenic. Sleeping with your face in a pillow that contains allergens will mean you wake up with symptoms you didn't go to bed with. Having your eyes, sinuses and airway bombarded by irritants throughout your night can only further compromise your need for quality sleep.

Dust mite resistant. More and more science is pointing to Demodex mites and their link to acne, rosacea and blepharitis (puffy eyes).

Proper airway positioning. A pillow that props your head forward, pushing your chin towards your chest closes your airway. This decreased airway can contribute to snoring and mild sleep apnea.

Recent focus on our society's sleep deprivation has made many of us aware of the negative impact of repeated poor nights' sleep. Weight gain, irritability, depression, poor mental focus, low energy and chronic illnesses are just the beginning. A pillow that has the necessary features will take you steps closer to a great night's sleep. A great pillow is an investment and should not take a back seat to a great handbag, a pair of shoes or a night on the town. Next time you lay your head down on your pillow, if you don't say, "Wow, that's just what I needed,"... it's likely time to treat yourself to a great pillow and in turn a great night's sleep. **W**

• Kim Renton and Kathy Young Keefe are the designers of the patented enVy Pillow (www.envypillow.com) which promises a great night's sleep in perfect alignment but off your face.



CELEBRATE
GOOD TIMES
COME ON

MUSIC FOR EVERY OCCASION
A complete variety of music to compliment your special event.
Offering everything from Yesterday's Classics to the Latest Hits.
Disc Jockey Entertainment for all events, specializing in International Music.

ENTERTAINMENT - CREATE AN EVENING OF EXCITEMENT
Interactive D.J. Entertainers • Novelty Items • State of the art Sound & Lighting Systems
Special Effects (Fog, Dry Ice, Video Presentations and much more!)

WEDDINGS, CORPORATE EVENTS, ALL OCCASIONS
Personalized Function Planning for your event • Equipped with complete back-up services
Ethnic speaking Disc Jockeys available on request.

IN-HOUSE DISC JOCKEY AND AUDIO VISUAL SERVICES
At The Terrace, West River and Bellvue Manor

Platinum
ENTERTAINMENT SOLUTIONS

CALL TODAY TO CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES
905.264.3550 • www.platinummusic.ca