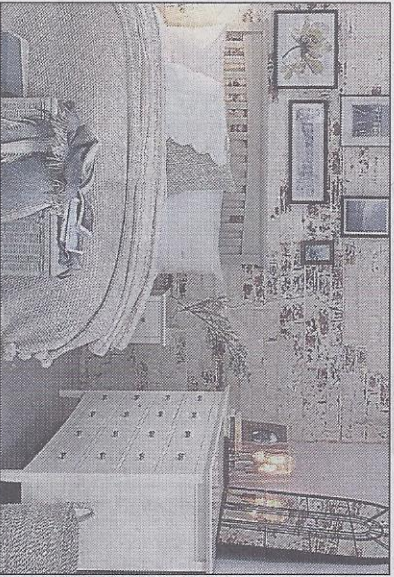


Responsive: Nottinblú "pressure-balanced" system adjusts to keep your spine in alignment (westendbedcompany.com)



Fits right in: the Hastings Ivory bed, from a compact range for smaller rooms by Marks & Spencer, prices £129-£549



Handmade in London: Button & Sprung Lavender double bed frame, in Argent, £875, (buttonandprung.com)



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Science of Sleep

A great night's sleep is the new must-have. Snuggle down, tracker on wrist, plug in the bed and relax, says **Barbara Chandler**

HERE'S nothing better than a good night's sleep. March is National Bed Month, an annual sales promotion launched by the British bed industry more than 20 years ago to persuade people to chuck out their old bed and buy a new one.

Today's makers stress the health and wellbeing benefits of restful sleep – and it's working. Bed sales at **John Lewis** are up 10 per cent year on year, while on the internet are countless firms selling beds "in a box" and making competing claims. Just be sure you can send the product back if it doesn't suit.

The National Bed Federation's "tick logo" means a bed conforms to laws covering fire safety, cleanliness of fillings and trade descriptions. Visit bedfed.org.uk for a guide to buying a bed.

MONITOR YOUR SLEEP

This new craze is fostered by wearable fitness trackers that sit on your wrist and record your total sleep time, whether deep or light, and how often you wake through the night. The **Fittit Alta** comes in pretty pink, priced about £130, while the new **Nokia Steel HR** is about £250. People are even buying stand-alone sleep monitors, with sales up 55 per cent at **John Lewis** in the past six weeks. For about £150 you get sleep analysis, soothing sounds "synced" with your breathing, and a gradual wake-up call for "a relaxed start to the day".

In Sheen, Brent Cooper, London's "Mr Bed", has been selling major brands in

the capital for 40 years. He brought **Hästens**, the premier Swedish brand, to Chelsea. Then two years ago he opened **Westend Bed Company** in Upper Richmond Road, SW14 (020 7723 2925; westendbedcompany.com), where he demonstrates the latest trend in hi-tech beds: motorised sleeping.

SUPPORT YOUR SPINE

These beds plug into the mains with a control to adjust the way they support you. New in from Italy is the **Northbiti**, the "fluid pressure-balanced sleep system" bed, which automatically adjusts to keep your spine in correct alignment, even if your weight and shape alter over time. They also suit a modern lifestyle. "Now you can comfortably lounge to surf the Net, check your social media and emails and watch TV," says Cooper. "Just adjust the bed to suit."

He's also stocking the **Supercad** from **Treca Interiors** in Paris, with four silent motors to adjust five independent sleeping surfaces. This type of bed will cost £4,000 upwards, though **Westend** has "normal" beds from £1,000.

"People simply don't spend enough on their bed," says Cooper. "My customers rock up in a Rolls but won't fork out for a good night's sleep that could change their lives."

He claims this "power steering for your mattress" will be ubiquitous in 10 years' time. Indeed, you really have to "test drive" these new beds to see what suits – and Cooper has a private sleep room for you to do just that.

'ORGANIC' BRITISH BEDS

Using natural materials, sourced and assembled in Britain, is another big trend for beds. Cooper has his own British handmade brand, while at **Abaca**, based in rural Wales, founder **Rhianon Rowley** worked with the Soil Association to develop her "organic" beds.

Heal's says its new "organic pocket" priced £1,299 is already a bestseller. Meanwhile, **Marks & Spencer** has an eco-factory in Somerset making a third of its bed range.

A wider bed than the old standard 4ft 6in (135cm) is now a no-brainer for couples seeking a better night's sleep. However, it eats floor space in small bedrooms of new homes. So you might want storage drawers in the base, or a mattress that lifts from one end to access a cavity for spare bedding. Sales of king size mattresses (150cm by 200cm) at **John Lewis** are up 19 per cent on last year, with a similar rise in sales of super king (180cm by 200cm).

EXPERTS say, however, that you don't have to spend thousands of pounds to improve your sleep. Simply leaving your phone outside your bedroom could help. You could cut out caffeine or fine-tune your duvet tog – **Ikea** advocates different togs for double sleeping. How about new pillows? **John Lewis** has racks to try, plus 24 "feel-me" samples for duvet fillings. Or try better-quality bed linen of not less than a 400 thread count.

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Left: Foxtail double bed frame in Shell fabric, £645 from Button & Sprung (as before)

Centre left: Wallis bed by Russell Pinch at Heal's, £1,899 (heals.com)

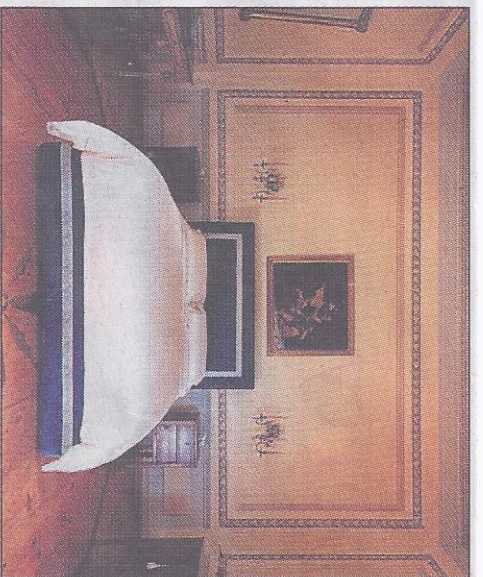
Below: with breathable fillings, Hypnos Royal Comfort Collection beds are said to offer the ultimate in sleeping luxury. From £2,880 at Westend Bed Company (as before)



Gorgeous neutrals: Jasmine double bed frame in Nickel soft wool fabric, £895 from Button & Sprung (as before)



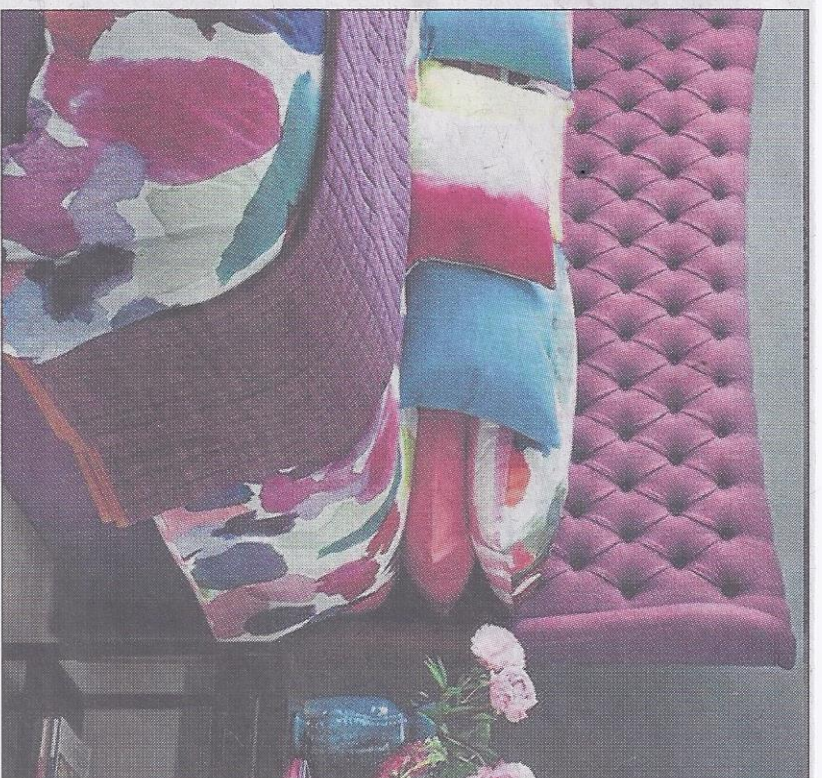
What a team: Hypnos Natural Collection bed with the Hazel Deluxe zoned sprung mattress, £549 (mynextmattress.co.uk)



Buona notte: the Roma bed from Nottinblü, £3,379. The Italian range is super-adjustable (westendbedcompany.com)



Size it up: Peony bed frame in Admiral fabric — single divan £545 to super king ottoman, £1,495 (buttonandsprung.com)



Timely: the arrival of fitness trackers that monitor the length and quality of your sleep has made wearers more "sleep aware". The Fitbit Alta, far left, £129.99, and the smart rose gold Nokia Steel HR activity watch, left, £249.99, deliver your sleep patterns to your smartphone (johnlewis.com)