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RIGHT AT HOME: Bedding trends to fight insomnia

By KIM COOK

For The Associated Press

Posted: Nov. 9 1:26 p.m.

If you've tossed all night because you were hot, restless or uncomfortable, read on.

Manufacturers are developing new ways to combat insomnia, including some technologies introduced at this fall's Las Vegas Furniture Market and High Point Market, two of the country's largest trade shows.

The hottest trends:

- Anti-sweat mattresses use new 3D fabrics that circulate air so you sleep cooler. Dormia and Hollandia International's versions are priced in the \$1,500-\$2,800 range for queen size.

- Homeopathic mattresses impregnated with essential oils like lavender, chamomile, rose and calendula have long been popular in Europe; now it's our turn. The scents are natural relaxants, and some even have anti-bacterial properties. Nanotechnology infuses millions of lavender microcapsules into the mattress' cover; when you lie down, some of the capsules break, releasing the fragrance. Magniflex's Lavender Comfort queen is \$1,899.

- Organic bedding can help people with allergies and those susceptible to chemicals emitted by synthetic materials. Eco-friendly wool, cotton, solid wood and natural rubber latex is produced by companies like Northern California's OMI, which was co-founded by author Walter Bader, who suffers from chemical sensitivity himself. Their OrganicPedic Sierra is \$1,995, while Ecomfort's plant-based foam mattress and Aireloom's certified organic cotton version are in the \$1,000 to \$3,000 range, depending on size.

- Lightweight futons are also new, replacing the bulky traditional standby. Futons are finding favor with those unwilling to spend on pricey, space-gobbling sofa beds. The new versions use refined foam engineering to make a plush, versatile, durable sleep surface.

According to Michael Nermon, vice president of the Specialty Sleep Association, other trends include customized mattresses with one firm side and one soft one. Advancements in the American bedding industry in recent years mean consumers can shop for more domestic products, too.

And personal technology demands have led manufacturers to design command central beds, complete with iPod docking stations and TVs. Just remember, multitaskers: Use that command post as a comfy "office" during the day, but turn it all off at night. Experts say you need to calm your brain with a book, quiet conversation or solitary reverie to get a good sleep.

Some tips from the National Sleep Foundation:

1. A supple, comforting mattress is better than a too-firm one, especially if you have back pain.
2. Sleeping with Rover? Not a good idea. It's comforting for many to have pets close by, but animals don't understand space sharing. Provide them a spot near your bed, instead.
3. Go with the glow. Our biological clocks are strongly influenced by light; the more bright

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light we're exposed to during the day, the better we'll sleep. Keep the bedroom dark, and use a low-illumination night light in the bathroom.

4. Sleep cool. In general, temperatures above 75 and below 54 disrupt sleep. Our internal temps drop at night, so most of us sleep better in a cool room.

5. Drip, drop, tick, tock. Banish annoying noises if they disrupt your rest. Conversely, city dwellers may toss and turn if it's too quiet; travel with a white-noise maker or favorite travel clock.

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