

# Dreaming of ways to minimize your allergy symptoms?

If you have sleep issues caused by allergies, it's a good idea to look for solutions before your minor symptoms snowball into bigger health issues. Getting a good night's sleep is one of the best ways you can strengthen your immune system and combat allergies symptoms such as: sneezing, coughing, snoring, dry mouth, itchy eyes, runny nose or difficulty breathing.



After having a bad “allergic” reaction to [Tempur-Pedic memory foam mattress topper](#), I decided to consult with an expert on ideas for how to make our bedroom a better place to sleep. In case you or someone you care about is sleeping on a Tempur-Pedic product, be sure to check out this post:

**[WAKE UP and read the label on your mattress](#)**

After I got rid of the [memory foam mattress topper](#), I called Kirsten Flynn of [Sustainable Home](#) to ask her to do a checkup on the rest of our bedroom. Before she came to our home she sent me some terrific advice about mattresses. Check out her answer to the following question:

[I'm shopping for a new mattress, preferably natural/organic if it's affordable. Any advice?](#)

Although we had already gotten rid of the Tempur-Pedic about a month or two earlier and our symptoms had drastically improved, I had a gut-feeling that our [Gateway Mattress](#) and box springs may need to go as well. It was simply based on some of the symptoms my husband and I experienced since the time we got the bed.

So when Kirsten sent some information about organic mattresses (ones that have not been sprayed with flame retardants), I immediately started searching for a new bed and we even purchased one from [The Futon Shop](#) before she came to do the consultation on the rest of the bedroom.

When Kirsten got to our home, she asked a number of questions to understand our lifestyle and what might work best for us. After doing a walk-through, she concluded that the main thing we needed to do was to minimize the accumulation of dust in our bedroom.

We live in a city and we like to keep good air flow through the apartment. She mentioned that this allows a lot of the outdoor air to enter our sleeping space. Although I didn't think of it as an issue previously, as soon as she mentioned it, I suddenly saw dust everywhere.

Not only is there a lot of dust from the road outside, it's exponentially worse on the days when the landscapers come through and use their blowers to clear away leaves and other debris. Kirsten mentioned that they cause even more pollution when they use gas-powered blowers rather than electric. The gas powered blowers put out exhaust causing even more harm to the environment, and especially to the operators.

Here are a few tips that Kirsten suggested to help reduce the

dust in our bedroom and to minimize some of the allergic reactions my husband and I were experiencing:

## **Wash bed linens and other textiles regularly**

You're probably already familiar with the benefits of washing your bed sheets regularly. It helps to minimize the risk of bed bugs as well as any allergic reaction you may have to the dust and particles that accumulate on your pillow and sheets.

Keep your window treatments simple, and easy to wash. If you prefer to sleep in a dark environment, buy [washable room darkening curtains](#) or blinds that are easy to clean.

## **Minimize the number of soft surfaces where dust can settle**



Common soft surfaces in the bedroom include: clothing, curtains, bed linens, stuffed animals, cushions on chairs or benches.

One of the biggest issues Kirsten found in our bedroom was the fact that my "closet" was out in the open. She suggested that I find ways to cover the clothing. Although we have a small walk-in closet, it's not big enough for both my husband and me to store all our clothing, luggage, shoes and so on.



One thing I love about this sort of open rack storage system is that it makes it easy to see all my clothes at once. The shelves are easy to adjust, unlike closet shelves which are usually screwed into the wall. We've had this [wire shelving garment rack system](#) for years. These sturdy racks break down into flat parts making them very easy to move. But the biggest issue is that they're completely open.

She suggested that I cover the open clothing racks since each individual clothing item becomes a place where dust can settle. There are many places for dust to enter the room and settle in between the open shelves of the clothes. She suggested that I find a way to cover the clothes better to help keep the dust from accumulating in the clothes.

With a little searching, I found this [InterMETRO natural cotton canvas cover](#). It was just what I needed. I also incorporated [Sterlite stacking drawers](#) to keep dust off my folded clothes.

## **Minimize the main source(s) of dust**

Some of the common things that increase dust in your bedroom include: pets, children, clothing, shoes, open windows or doors, and possibly even food. You can curtail most of these

sources from the inside of your home, but you also need to consider what's going on just outside your bedroom doors and windows.



If you're like me and you like to open your windows, you'll have extra dust in your home. If you have pets, you'll have extra dust in your home. If you wear shoes indoors, you'll have extra dust in your home.

We all have personal preferences. You may want to keep your windows open, sleep with your cat or wear shoes in your home, but consider making slow changes toward a cleaner sleeping environment.

All my clothes were open to collecting dust and I had a lot of shoe boxes and shoes stacked on top of boxes. Not only do the shoes and their boxes collect dust, but shoes can bring other toxins and bacteria from outside into your home.

### [Why your home should be a shoe-free zone](#)

Can you begin by making your bedroom a shoe-free zone, for example?

## Clean the floor

Kirsten recommends vacuuming frequently using a vacuum with a HEPA filter. If you have hard surface flooring, you can vacuum up the dust and then wet-clean the floor. Wet-cleaning is the best way to remove all the dust.

Vacuuming also helps to pull dust out of carpeting. Keep in mind, however, that no matter how much you vacuum, you'll never be able to get all the dust out of the carpeting. It settles deep into the carpet and padding, and just keeps getting dirtier over the years.



If you have wall-to-wall carpeting, it's best to replace it with hard surface flooring. But if you're renting or don't have the budget to switch out the flooring, the best solution is to vacuum frequently.

## Dust regularly

Dust tends to accumulate on nightstands, headboards, and on less accessible areas such as the tops of armoires, mirrors and door frames.

You have to decide what "regularly" means to you. If you take

steps to reduce the sources of dust in your bedroom, then “regularly” can be less often. If you want to spend less time dusting, try to simplify your bedroom as much as possible. Less stuff means less dusting.

When you’re dusting, be sure to use a nontoxic spray. Check [EWG’s Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#) for ratings on common household cleaners.

## Use an air filter

Kirsten suggested that we purchase an [Austin Bedroom Machine air filter](#) so that we could keep the air as clean as possible. According to [Austin](#), clean air offers a number of benefits:

- sounder sleep
- reduced snoring
- stop sneezing
- reduce nighttime allergies and asthma attacks
- strengthen your immune system
- reduced coughing and wheezing
- eliminate dry mouth and runny nose

Buying a quality HEPA air filter might seem a bit extreme at first, but think about it for a minute. Smokers and people who live in highly polluted areas increase their risk of health issues. The cleaner the air, the better. If you have allergies and you’re extra sensitive to air borne pollutants, clean air may be the one thing you need most to help get a good night’s sleep.

I’m a big believer in drinking pure water to flush the inside of my body:

**[Drink distilled water daily to detox and defend your body](#)**

The same logic applies to flushing out your lungs. If you

sleep in a clean environment for about a third of the day, it gives your lungs and body a chance to rejuvenate every night.

But what about the cost? A good air filter is a small investment in comparison to the cost of poor health, not only as it relates to your daily productivity, but also to the cost of long term illnesses that occurs because your body doesn't have the chance to regenerate each night.

Looking for other ways to minimize your allergy symptoms and improve your indoor air quality throughout your home? Check out more suggestions from Kirsten at:

[\*5 Ways to Improve your Air for a More Sustainable Home\*](#)

Even Rodney Dangerfield believes that everyone deserves a good night's sleep. "I asked my wife, 'last night, were you faking it?' She said, 'No, I was really sleeping.'" [\*Just-One-Liners\*](#)

