

# Can this 'superbed' give you the perfect sleep?

By **STEPHANIE ZINSER**

**A** BED that changes its shape through the night to suit your position could be one of the most advanced breakthroughs in the search for a perfect night's sleep.

The 'intelligent' bed has a computer that senses when you shift position, so it can follow the contours of your body and prevent back and neck aches.

The mattress, too, is uniquely shaped and made of a special foam developed by NASA scientists to keep astronauts comfortable in their heavy space suits.

But the bed of the future isn't cheap. The Oro Sleep System costs from £3,700, with a top-of-the-range model at £25,000.

Yugoslav-born inventor Lubo Gnatovich stumbled upon the idea for the bed during a holiday four years ago. 'My arm accidentally slipped through the slats of a sun-lounger and instantly the chronic back pain I had suffered for 20 years was relieved.'

'I realised that if I could develop a mattress with a recess for the shoulders to rest in when sleeping on one's side, this would take the body weight off the shoulder, and free the spine to rest in its optimum alignment.'

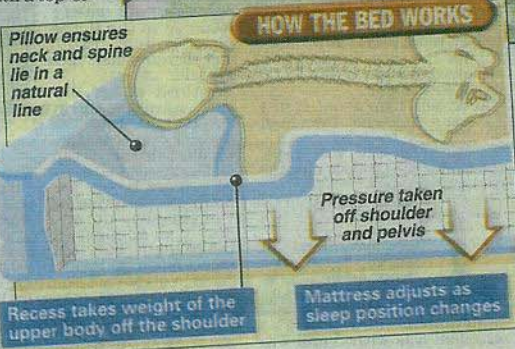
He made the mattress using fire-retardant, slow-recovery memory foam, which was developed by NASA to prevent and ease pressure sores in astronauts.

A memory foam pillow with an adjustable airbag is an integral part of the system.

**B**ECAUSE some people have wider shoulders than others, it is important to be able to adjust the pillow height to keep the neck straight and the spine stress-free,' says Gnatovich.

Most people change position dozens of times every night, and Gnatovich spent years perfecting the mattress that can move with the body.

The majority of people prefer



**Time for bed: Paul and Sarah, above, found the Oro very relaxing. Left: How it works**

to be flat when side-sleeping, but with their head and shoulders slightly raised when back-sleeping.

His solution was simple: he implanted an air bellows-type pressure sensor in the mattress's recessed area, and connected it to a computer chip, housed inside the motor that raises or lowers the mattress via a remote control.

'When a person lies on their side, the sensor detects the shoulders pressing into the recess. When they turn onto their back, the sensor detects the pressure releasing, and relays this to the chip in the motor,' says Gnatovich.

'The computer tells the motor to slowly adjust the mattress to give the best support, for the back-sleeping position.

But does the bed give a good night's sleep, and is it worth the money?

Good Health asked osteopath Paul Summers, 34, and his girlfriend, Sarah Randall, 27, a lawyer, to bed-test the Oro Sleep System for a weekend. Both have histories of back trouble.

Paul treats patients with posture-related problems and spinal pain, of which a bad bed is often a contributory factor.

'A good bed is essential,' says Paul. 'You spend a third of your

life asleep and if your bed does not support you, your muscles work overly hard where the bed should be taking the strain.

'A good bed is part of good back care, and can make the difference between waking up feeling rested and spending a day with stiffness and pain.'

He often treats patients who are disabled, who can't lie flat but who can't sleep upright either. 'An adjustable bed is good for them,' he says.

After testing the bed for a weekend, Paul and Sarah gave us their verdicts.

**S**ARAH says: 'I had high expectations, mainly because it is expensive. The idea of a mattress with a chunk taken out for your shoulder sounds bizarre, but it was comfortable to sleep on your side.

'The adjustable positions are lovely for reading and the vibrating massage was relaxing. You don't feel the gap lying on your back, and it supports you where you need it.'

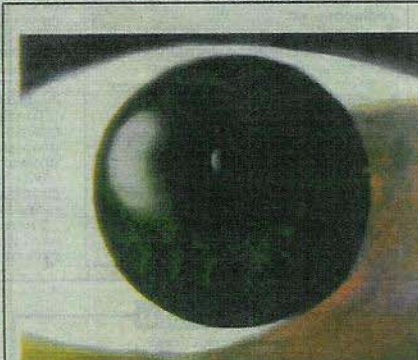
Paul says: 'The thing that's special is that it adjusts automatically while you're asleep. The shoulder recess works nicely when you're on your side, but I found it less supportive on my tummy or back.'

'The pillow was a little too hard for me, although you can change that. The mattress quality was excellent, and I did have two fantastic nights' sleep.'

'Would I buy one? Probably not, mainly because I'm not a gadget man, but it's wonderfully made, and a disabled person or someone who wanted an all-singing, all-dancing bed would probably rate it 10/10.'

Oro have added other features to the bed. There is a childproof lock to prevent little hands from adjusting the bed and there is a timer for people who often fall asleep while reading or watching TV. This automatically lowers the bed to the pre-set sleeping position after a certain time.

■ **FOR details, call Oro UK Ltd on 01753 868088.**



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## For slimming, just patch it up

IF YOU thought nicotine patches were good, then maybe you'll want to try the latest slimming craze from the U.S. — the patch that helps you lose weight while you wear it on your arm or hip.

The No-Diet Dermopatch, it is claimed, is based on a centuries-old weight control remedy applied to the same modern technology used in nicotine, HRT and contraceptive patches.

Manufacturer Advanced Health And Beauty claims that once you stick the patch on the skin, it releases natural minerals into the body which boost the metabolism, helping the body to burn fat more quickly.

There is, the firm says, no diet regime and, so long as you eat

sensibly and healthily, you don't even need to think about calories — just remember to change the patch every three days, for a minimum of six weeks.

The patch contains minerals derived from seaweed, which is described in the Royal Horticultural Society's Encyclopedia as 'a tonic herb that stimulates the thyroid, helps control weight and has antibiotic effects'.

In two U.S. trials, groups of 24 and 48 were split, half were given the Dermopatch and the other half a placebo patch. Results in the two Dermopatch groups were similar; the average weight losses were 1.5kg and 1.72kg respectively. Sandra Lees, joint managing

director of Advanced Health And Beauty Ltd, says: 'This product really does work, but not in the traditional way that we understand dieting.'

'The patch gradually releases its natural minerals into the system over three days to boost the metabolism before being replaced with a new one.'

'Of course, without reducing calories it will take longer to lose weight, than if one was on a diet. I have used two packs of the patches and over 12 weeks have dropped a full dress size.'

■ **The No-Diet Dermopatch can be bought by mail-order: cost £34.95 (plus £2.50 p&p) for a six-week supply. Tel: 0800 072 5727.**

**BONNIE ESTRIDGE**