

GLAMOUR

By Lisa Harvey

If you can't sleep, you know you'll try anything. But is it worth paying for a better kip? Team GLAMOUR finds out...

What comes to mind when you think of a luxury? A massage? A Gucci tee? A super-yacht? What about a good night's sleep? Because when was the last time you woke up really refreshed? Exactly.

Last year, The Sleep School in London (the UK's largest insomniac treatment centre) found that we're losing the equivalent of an entire night's sleep each week. Out of the 11,000 people surveyed, 39% were suffering with chronic insomnia, and only 1% believed they woke up feeling refreshed. One per cent. Let's just let that sink in.

"We're in the middle of a sleeplessness epidemic, and my biggest fear for 2017 is that insomnia is becoming normalised," says leading sleep psychologist Dr Guy Meadows. "Sleep should be a fundamental priority, but now it's having to fight for a chance in our lives."

But as we're drifting along like an extra from *The Walking Dead*, the sleep industry has woken up with a money-making bang. There's everything from gadgets to luxury hotels offering comprehensive sleep retreats. It's a huge market – growing to £59 million in 2016 – but for us, the consumer, it's pretty overwhelming. And expensive.

Realistically, eight hours of quality shut-eye might not be priceless (how many of us can afford to drop £6,000 on a mattress?), but it's definitely valuable. So, what's worth the investment?

"I want to cure my diagnosed insomnia"

Tester: Holly, Deputy Chief Sub Editor

The product: Backed by clinicians, the Alpha-Stim AID is a pocket-sized device that comes with electrodes that clip onto your earlobes and sends tiny electric currents (known as cranial electrotherapy stimulation) to the brain to increase 'alpha' (relaxing) activity. Sounds scary, but it's totally safe.

My verdict: Name an insomnia treatment and there's a good chance I've tried it (and it's failed), from prescription medication to 5-HTP (serotonin-boosting) supplements, so I was cautiously optimistic about this sci-fi-sounding gadget. Following a phone consultation, I was instructed to get into bed, attach the clips and set the timer for one hour on level one (of five) for my sleep-onset insomnia. I fell asleep within the hour. The effects were cumulative – I trialled it for ten days and each night it seemed to bring me to a relaxed state, helping me to sleep better than I had in months. It's not the most comfortable thing to wear in bed but, for me, the results make up for it.

Available from alpha-stim.co.uk