

Noise reduction tips when you live on a main road

Block the traffic noise, mask it or both? Here are some great ways to get a deep sleep, from investment in plants and walls, to quick fixes and tweaks that work like a dream.

Create a sound barrier

If you're planning to stay in your property for a long time, or looking to sell or rent in the near future, you might want a permanent fix to the traffic noise. Insulation provided by a high wall, backed up with a dense hedge, is a great long-term plan. Local and state councils often have restrictions and guidelines for fencing, so please check first to make sure your planned changes are permitted.

However, your well-designed fencing and slow-growing privet's good work will be undone if you don't tackle the weakest point of sound resistance, which is usually your windows.

Upgrade your windows

Double-glazed and laminated windows can be pricey, but very effective – as long as they're closed. Properly installed windows can block out more than half of the traffic noise. Make sure you haven't overlooked street-facing air vents, which might be where most of the sound infiltrates. A tiny gap in an otherwise efficient noise barrier will let in much of the outside noise.

Again, make sure any structural changes adhere to local and state government building regulations.

Create your own soundscape

Another option for masking the hustle and bustle on your doorstep is to create your own soundscape. Low-volume background music of your choice can calm and distract in the daytime. While sleeping, try playing nature recordings: rain, waterfalls or sounds of the forest.

Wear earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones

Of the blocking techniques, the cheapest of all is – of course – plain old foam earplugs from the chemist. It's definitely worth investing a few bucks to give them a go, but they're generally not good with the low frequencies of heavy traffic.

Noise-cancelling headphones are a bit smarter. They generate a signal in response to noise in your

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vicinity that cancels out its frequency. They're best at reducing a single, steady frequency range, so they're perfect if you're on a straight stretch of road where the never-ending traffic streams by at an even pace.

For a more comfortable sleep, go for bud-style in-ear headphones. If the budget allows, try cordless headphones to avoid tangles during the night.

If you can't sleep wearing earplugs or headphones, pop on your favourite old desk fan. It will generate a tone you might find so comfortably familiar that you can blissfully snooze while it blows away the bus-route blues.

Move your bedroom to the quietest spot

A totally low-tech solution is to move your bedroom to the quietest room in the house, even if there's only enough space for your bed! Consider turning that noisy front room into a living room, especially if it means you can actually sleep soundly in your home.

Now you're starting to block out some noise, experiment with combinations for your circumstances. Mix and match these ideas and soon you'll find yourself saying, "Oh that? I don't even hear it anymore."