

TREND
ON
TRIAL

THERMOCULES



Hot flushes playing havoc with your sleep? Don't sweat it! Emma Markezic goes undercover and discovers there may be an astronaut-inspired solution to your problem



Baby formula, artificial limbs, smoke detectors, wireless headphones — can you guess what all these things have in common? Apart from the fact they're all lifesavers (literally or otherwise), what they have in common is space travel. Because none of these would exist without the boffins at NASA. And the space agency's latest contraption gaining attention is poised to be a Hail Mary commodity for women going through menopause — or anyone who has a love/hate relationship with their bed linen.

Having spent a couple of decades trying to make astronauts less hot and bothered in their unwieldy space gloves, NASA eventually came up with what are now called Thermocules. Embedded in or coated on to fabrics, it's best to imagine them as being like microscopic pockets of wax that melt and solidify with changing temperatures. And now NASA's phase-change technology is being farmed out on planet Earth to makers of mattresses, doonas, sports jerseys, baby sleeping bags — even tumblers.

The result is a fabric that keeps the wearer cooler than a cucumber in a really expensive gin

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and tonic. Which I'm very interested in, because here's a fun fact: I recently went through menopause. At 35. If you think hot flushes are bad, try having them on a Tinder date at a Nine Inch Nails concert!

I decide to try a Thermocule-laced doona — because night sweats are my nemesis. And you don't have to be in the full swing of menopause to understand that fiery melting from the inside out. Recent studies have shown that perimenopause is a very real phenomenon — an extended period of pre-menopause which can span years — where your body's reproductive system starts slowing down. Sorry-not-sorry, but those hot flushes are coming for you (or perhaps your sleeping partner) soon, if they haven't already.

The doona I choose looks and feels exactly like the regular kind. But the proof, as they say,

is in the pudding, so I replace my old one with this one to see what happens. And for a week, nothing does. Absolutely nothing — I don't wake up; I'm not startled into consciousness by a heatwave; I don't lie there frustrated in a slimy pool of sweat. Until day eight, that is. Day eight, I wake up in one mother of a puddle. It's 2am, which is when they show old episodes of Star Trek, so I eventually give in to the rude awakening until the flush dies down.

Usually for me, seeing is believing. I need to eyeball the special coat of wax/guacamole/gold flecks I'm paying extra for. When it's invisible and the retailer is using words like 'thermal balancing' and 'constant microclimate', it's easy to be a sceptic. But my 'research' says this actually works pretty well. And for the life-change challenged among us, that is no small blessing. In the quest for better sleep, this is up there with high-strength melatonin.

If anyone from NASA is reading, I'd love sunglasses that treat my under-eye bags next. I just know you're working on some kind of infra-red-helmet technology... hand it over! **Emma is a comedian, writer and b+s' intrepid trend guinea pig. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram @markyknowsbest**

THE LOWDOWN

WHAT: Thermocule-filled bedding.

WHERE: Try bambury.com.au

HOW MUCH: The Sonar Thermal Balancing quilts start from \$184.95 for a single size.

I QUESTION: Why my boyfriend felt the need to say: "Hey, you haven't done a clammy mole rat impression once this week." Oh yeah? Well don't try doing your octopus impression for a while, either.

I ENJOYED: Ten hours of uninterrupted sleep. TEN!

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