

Nightmares

Nightmare Facts

- Nightmares are very common. About 75-90% of people who experience stressful life events report nightmares.
- Nightmares happen during the REM sleep stage.
- They help us to process difficult emotions and are very important for healing from trauma. It's like you're doing self-therapy while you sleep!
- The goal shouldn't be to get rid of nightmares entirely- they serve an important purpose. Instead, the goal is to help reduce distress and make them a little easier to tolerate.

Managing Nightmares

Step 1: Keep a diary of your nightmares.

- Write down what you remember from your dreams each morning when you first wake.
- Rate the intensity of the emotions in the dreams from 1-10.
- Write down any themes that stood out to you.

Step 2: Use Imagery Rehearsal. *Remember: Practice makes perfect. This is unlikely to help when only used once or twice. It's all about repetition and practice.*

- Write down the dream you want to focus on.
- Think about how you'd want it to change or be different. Write it down.
- Rehearse the modified dream: Close your eyes, use mental images and picture the new dream as vividly as possible several times, for at least 3-5 minutes.
- Do this every night before bed.