



## How to Lucid Dream

Lucid dreaming takes time and practice to learn. By regularly practicing the following techniques, you can train your brain to lucid dream.

1. Make your bedroom hospitable to dreaming.

Dreams occur during REM, the last stage of your sleep cycle which occurs in increasing amounts during the second half of the night. To enjoy more dreams, you need to enjoy more restful sleep to ensure you get as much REM as possible. (Good news: REM is also associated with better memory, improved focus, and greater emotional regulation!)

To get better sleep, follow good sleep hygiene. Keep your bedroom as dark, cool, and quiet as possible. Use blackout curtains or an eye mask to block out any ambient light. Use ear plugs or a white noise machine to do the same with noise.

Finally, before you go to bed, follow a calming bedtime routine. Engage in restful activities like unplugging from your electronics, taking a warm bath, or practicing aromatherapy or meditation.

## 2. Keep a dream journal.

The first step to successful lucid dreaming is tuning in to your dreams. Keep a dream journal by your bed, and the moment you wake up, write down everything you remember from your dream. If you think faster than you write, try recording your memories as a voice memo on your phone.

Alternately, you can download a dream journal app, such as Awoken or Dream Journal Ultimate. In addition to letting you record your dreams, the value of these apps over traditional pen and paper is that they allow you to search your dream notes for recurring themes, symbols, and characters—which brings us to our next step.

## 3. Recognize your dream signs.

Don't just record your dreams in your journal and leave it be. Review your dream journal regularly and look for any patterns. Do certain themes or people show up again and again? These may provide insights into the types of issues your inner psyche is focused on. More importantly, they will help you start recognizing when you're dreaming.

The more aware you are of your dream signs, the quicker you'll be able to identify when you're in a dream state.

#### 4. Perform reality checks.

Reality checks help you confirm whether you're awake or asleep. The idea is to get your brain used to the idea of identifying whether you're dreaming or not, so you can be more equipped to do so while you're asleep.

Lucid dreaming experts recommend doing any of the following about 10 times per day:

- Try to push the index finger of one hand through the palm of your opposite hand. Do so with the expectation that you'll be able to make this happen, while asking yourself both before and after whether you're dreaming. In a dream, this would actually happen, although it wouldn't in reality. By keeping an open mind and questioning your reality both before and after, you help yourself truly recognize when you're dreaming or not. Plus, by making this a regular habit, you eventually might repeat this same experiment in your dream, and when your finger goes through, you'll know you're dreaming.
- You might also closely observe your hands and feet. These tend to be distorted in dreams.
- Look at a clock or a page of text in a book, then look quickly away and back. In a dream, the time or text is likely to change, but in the real world, it will stay the same.

#### 5. Use the MILD technique.

The MILD technique stands for Mnemonic Induction to Lucid Dreaming. Every night as you're falling asleep, repeat the same phrase to yourself. It should be along the lines of "I will know that I am dreaming" or something similar. Keep repeating it until you fall asleep.

By repeating this mantra, you're encouraging your brain to be aware when you begin dreaming, increasing your chances of having a lucid dream.

#### 6. Try going back to sleep.

When you wake up from a dream, stay in bed as you write down anything you remember in your dream journal. Then, close your eyes and try to go back to sleep, focusing on the dream. Play the dream out in your mind, but this time, imagine that you were aware that you were dreaming. Keep focusing on this as you fall back asleep.

#### 7. Use the Wake Back to Bed technique.

The Wake Back to Bed technique involves scheduling alarms to maximize your chances of waking up during REM sleep, so that when you fall back asleep you are more likely to re-enter your dream.

Set an alarm to go off 4.5, 6, or 7 hours after you first fall asleep. Only choose one of those times. The 6- or 7-hour mark is more likely to catch you during a REM stage of sleep, since REM sleep lasts longer in the second portion of the night.

When your alarm goes off, stay awake for 30 to 60 minutes. After writing your dream down in your journal, get out of bed and do something. You want your brain to wake up while your body stays sleepy. Then, get back into bed, focus on your dream, and try to fall back asleep.

*\* Note: We don't recommend this method as a long-term practice at Tuck.*

*Disrupting your REM sleep results in sleep deprivation, which has both short-term and long-term consequences to your health.*

8. Try to keep your dream going.

If you begin experiencing lucid dreams, congratulations!

Don't be upset if you have a lot of false starts at first. In the beginning, it's very common to have difficulty spending a long time in the dream. Many beginning lucid dreamers get so excited by the realization that they're in a lucid dream that they inadvertently wake themselves up. Or, their mind is just getting used to the sensation that they don't stay in it for very long.

To prolong your dream, try one of these tips. Pro lucid dreamers suggest this help establish you in the dream state and distract your mind from the physical sensations of waking up.

- Fall backward or spin around in the dream.
- Rub your hands together in the dream.
- Continue doing whatever you were just doing in the dream and try to convince yourself you're still in the dream.