



Six things you can do to manage nightmares (and show them that YOU'RE the boss)

Talk about the nightmare – sometimes just talking about things with someone we trust makes them less scary. Talking can also help our brains to make sense of all the thoughts and worries they are dealing with, so that they stop being such a problem (see Point 5).

Draw the nightmare – this helps you get the images out of your head and onto paper.

Re-write the nightmare: change the ending – write or draw a new, better, happier ending for your nightmare. This gives your brain something else to think about and to remember, instead of it getting stuck on the scary memory of the dream. Describe the new dream in as much detail as possible. If you wanted to, you could even act out the new ending. Moving around when you're acting it out helps your body to get rid of pent up energy in your muscles, which will help your muscles to relax, which will make it easier to get back to sleep.

Have a dream-catcher – you can find dream-catchers for sale at a number of different shops, or you can make your own. Dream-catchers are supposed to trap the scary dreams in their net, so that only good dreams get through to your sleeping brain!

Talk to the monster – have an imaginary conversation with the monster in your dream. Ask them if there is something that they want to tell you, and what is worrying them. Sometimes our brains use dreams to give us messages about things that are worrying/stressing them out. Unfortunately, it's not always obvious what the heck they're trying to say! Maybe the monster want to be sure that you can protect yourself, or that you are safe? What could you say to reassure it, or let it know that you really don't need it to "help" you?

Make up a poem or a mantra that you can say to help you calm down again after you've woken up from the nightmare. Make it something short, simple, and reassuring, so that your frightened brain will be able to remember it. Do some calm breathing while you repeat your poem/mantra to yourself. If you believe in God, you could have a special "Nightmare Prayer" that you pray, to help you feel safe, calm, and loved again.

Some examples: I am safe in my home

 I am safe, I am loved, I am strong

 It was a dream, it is over, this is real life

What could your prayer, poem or mantra be?

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