

Want to control your dreams? Here's how

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Credit: Vera Kratochvil/public domain

New research at the University of Adelaide has found that a specific combination of techniques will increase people's chances of having lucid dreams, in which the dreamer is aware they're dreaming while it's still happening and can control the experience.

Although many techniques exist for inducing lucid dreams, previous studies have reported low success rates, preventing researchers from being able to study the potential benefits and applications of [lucid dreaming](#).

Dr Denholm Aspy's research in the University of Adelaide's School of Psychology is aimed at addressing this problem and developing more effective lucid [dream](#) induction techniques.

The results from his studies, now published in the journal *Dreaming*, have confirmed that people can increase their chances of having a lucid dream.

The study involved three groups of participants, and investigated the effectiveness of three different lucid dream induction techniques:

1. reality testing – which involves checking your environment several times a day to see whether or not you're dreaming.
2. wake back to bed – waking up after five hours, staying awake for a short period, then going back to sleep in order to enter a REM sleep period, in which dreams are more likely to occur.
3. MILD (mnemonic induction of lucid dreams) – which involves waking up after five hours of sleep and then developing the intention to remember that you are dreaming before returning to sleep, by repeating the phrase: "The next time I'm dreaming, I will remember that I'm dreaming." You also imagine yourself in a lucid dream.

Among the group of 47 people who combined all three techniques, participants achieved a 17 percent success rate in having [lucid dreams](#) over the period of just one week – significantly higher compared to a baseline week where they didn't practise any techniques. Among those who were able to go to sleep within the first five minutes of completing the MILD technique, the success rate of lucid dreaming was much higher, at almost 46 percent of attempts.

"The MILD technique works on what we call 'prospective memory' – that is, your ability to remember to do things in the future. By repeating a phrase that you will remember you're dreaming, it forms an intention in your mind that you will, in fact, remember that you are dreaming, leading to a lucid dream," says Dr. Aspy, Visiting Research Fellow in the University's School of Psychology.

"Importantly, those who reported success using the MILD [technique](#) were significantly less sleep deprived the next day, indicating that lucid dreaming did not have any negative effect on sleep quality," he says.

"These results take us one step closer to developing highly effective lucid dream induction techniques that will allow us to study the many

potential benefits of lucid dreaming, such as treatment for nightmares and improvement of physical skills and abilities through rehearsal in the lucid dream environment," Dr. Aspy says.

More information: For more information and to take part in the study, see:

www.luciddreamingaustralia.com

Denholm J. Aspy et al, Reality testing and the mnemonic induction of lucid dreams: Findings from the national Australian lucid dream induction study., *Dreaming* (2017). [dx.doi.org/10.1037/drm0000059](https://doi.org/10.1037/drm0000059)

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