



## Managing the Complexities of Sleep Paralysis

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### Description

Sleep paralysis is a peculiar and often unpleasant phenomenon that occurs when a person is temporarily unable to move or speak while falling asleep or waking up. This fascinating condition, situated between dreams and wakefulness, is accompanied by a sense of immobility and sometimes intense hallucinations. While sleep paralysis itself is not harmful, it can be a distressing experience. Understanding, managing and demystifying this phenomenon is important for individuals who come across it. Sleep paralysis occurs when the transition between sleep stages is disrupted. Typically, during Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep, the body experiences muscle atonia, a natural mechanism that prevents a person from acting out the dreams. In sleep paralysis, this atonia of muscles, persists as the person becomes partially or fully aware, developing a temporary inability to move or speak.

One of the key features of sleep paralysis is the vivid hallucinations that often accompany it. These hallucinations can range from a feeling of a presence in the room to more elaborate and sometimes frightening visions. The combination of immobility and vivid illustrations contributes to the intense and unusual nature of the experience. While sleep paralysis is a relatively common phenomenon, with up to 40% of the population experiencing it at least once in their lives, recurrent incidents may cause emotional discomfort. Individuals may develop anxiety about going to sleep, being afraid of a repeat of the event of the paralysis incident. Understanding sleep paralysis is a natural part of the sleep cycle and not indicative of a serious health issue is a vital step in managing its impact on well-being.

Managing paralysis during sleep involves adopting various strategies to manage associated anxiety and improve overall sleep quality. Relaxation techniques, like deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation, helps to develop a condition of calmness, potentially reducing the likelihood of sleep paralysis incidents. Establishing a consistent sleep routine and maintaining good sleep hygiene contribute to overall sleep quality, potentially diminishing the frequency of incidents. Some individuals find adjusting sleep positions, such as sleeping on the side instead of the back, beneficial in influencing the occurrence of sleep paralysis. Addressing underlying sleep disorders, including narcolepsy or insomnia, is important, as resolving these conditions can lead to a reduction in sleep paralysis incidents. Providing with a comfortable sleep environment by ensuring a dark, quiet and comfortable sleeping area also plays a role in managing sleep paralysis. Seeking support from friends, family or mental health professionals can provide valuable assistance in alleviating the emotional distress associated with sleep paralysis.

Sleep hygiene practices play a vital role in managing sleep paralysis. Consistent sleep patterns, avoiding caffeine just before going to sleep and generating a relaxing pre-sleep routine can contribute to a more stable sleep cycle. Additionally, minimizing screen time before bedtime is essential, as the blue light emitted by electronic devices can interfere with the body's natural circadian rhythm. While sleep paralysis itself is generally harmless, persistent and severe incidents may warrant professional intervention. If sleep paralysis is significantly impacting daily life, causing severe distress or is associated with other sleep disorders, consultation with a sleep specialist or healthcare provider is advisable. They can conduct a thorough evaluation, including sleep studies if necessary, to identify contributing factors and recommend appropriate interventions.

### Conclusion

Sleep paralysis, while a little uncomfortable moment, is a common and generally harmless phenomenon. Managing its complexities involves a combination of understanding its nature, adopting healthy sleep practices and addressing any underlying sleep disorders. By implementing a conducive sleep environment, individuals can reduce the frequency and emotional impact of sleep paralysis incidents. Seeking professional help when needed ensures a comprehensive approach to overall sleep health. Embracing a comprehensive perspective on sleep, including sleep paralysis, contributes to a more restful and restorative sleep of the night, promoting overall well-being.

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