

# Nightmare RESCRIPTING



Rescripting your nightmare is a way to retrain your brain how to handle the experiences that revisit you in your dreams. With this exercise, you pair the experience of thinking through the unpleasant aspects of your dream with a soothing or relaxing activity. Once you change your nightmare script, you rehearse it so that your mind will bring details from your daytime thoughts into your nighttime thoughts.

## Step 1 Engage in relaxing activity

Examples: progressive muscle relaxation, listen to music, listen to a guided visualization, paced breathing, mindfulness (example: paying attention to every aspect of grooming yourself)

## Step 2 Choose a recurring nightmare

This can be a repeating theme - like being chased or being unprepared for a test, etc.

## Step 3 Write out the script

Write as though you are making a movie script. Where were you? Who else was there? How did it start? Then what happens? How does it end?

Include sensory details - sights, sounds, smells, touch and taste

Include your emotions. How were you feeling? What made you feel what?

# Nightmare **RESCRIPTING** cont.

## **Step 4 Identify the worst point in the dream**

Write down what happened. Where were you? What is happening? How did you feel about it? What did you feel in your body? (example heart pounding)

## **Step 5 Write the desired emotion**

What was the worst emotion from step 4? How would you rather feel? Be as specific as possible. Example “bad” could breakdown to: threatened, shamed, embarrassed, grieved, regretful, out of control, unprepared, etc.

## **Step 6 Change the worst moment**

You can be creative. You’re not limited to realistic scenarios. You can pull in people you’ve never met or have a special power that helps you overcome.

## **Step 7 Practice reading the script aloud**

You want to rehearse this during the day. You may need to practice several times during the day.  
Read it aloud.  
Make an audio recording and listen to it.

## **Step 8 Read before bed then relax**

Read or listen to the script just before you go to bed. Then engage in one of the relaxing activities from step 1.



