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Beating Middle of the Night Stress

By Kate Hufstetler

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What do you do when you wake up in the middle of the night and cannot go back to sleep? Do you lie there tossing, stretch, panic, and feel your heart thumping? Do you notice your own shallow breathing? Do you try futilely to follow the random speeding thoughts that race through your mind?

Back in 1991 I met an elderly man in the grocery store. He must have been around 87. Approaching my cart, he leaned in and said "young lady would you like to know how to get to be my age?" To which I answered "sure". He then went on to explain that since he had been my age and out on his own, never once did he ever spend a sleepless night in bed. If he should have trouble dosing off, or worse—wake in the middle of the night, he simply & promptly got up out of bed and got busy about living.

At 22 I was not in the habit of having trouble falling asleep. No—in fact my trouble was choosing to go to sleep when there was always so much fun to get into. Now at 35, I fully appreciate the words this man offered to me. In my case, rarely is a sleepless night caused randomly. However, nights like that have occurred to me as well.

Here are some suggestions of things to do —should sleep evade you.

Have a cup of herbal tea and read a relaxing book to start your day... or before trying sleep again.

Have a cup of coffee and read some motivational literature to jump start your morning.

Put on music, or a spoken word tape / CD if necessary to shut off the chatter in your mind.

Take care of any physical symptoms that are bothering you—headache, upset stomach, heart burn.

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Take action on any issue on your mind— you can write out an action plan for the next few months, weeks, days, hours ahead (break it down into manageable chunks) this will help you to feel like you have control by having a plan and thereby not giving up on yourself and the issue. you can organize any materials that might pertain to that area of life. read information on the topic—becoming informed sometimes has a calming affect. put in any direct effort to move the situation along possible. Bite the bullet so to speak—take the action you have been delaying.

Do something else productive around the house. Find something you can do without bothering others that will free up your day time later. If you get stuff out of the way at night—you can spend the daytime addressing any issue that has your sleep disturbed.

Set some more goals for you life.

Visualize where you want to be in 4 months, in 1 year, in 3 years, in 5 years, in 8 years, in 10 years, up through old age.

Write these down and read them repeatedly. Focus on where you are headed, rather than on the current tough spot.

Dream of vacations you will take. Then plan how you can get that accomplished. Set a goal or a course of action.

Write letters (real letters hand written) to your children, parents, or closest friends. Try to focus on the good in your life and your goals ahead. The more you focus on the good the better you will feel.

Find something or someone to be involved with other than yourself—who can you be thinking good thoughts for? Who is in need of positive thoughts and/ or prayer? Spend some time thinking about those who touch your life daily, and the lives of all those you care for—the list could be endless. Spend positive time wishing all those extended people happiness, health, and blessings.

Take review of your life— have you forgotten any celebrations lately? Have you left unnoticed and concerns that affect your loved ones? Write a couple notes and take the proper steps to connect with them regarding those issues now.

Plan out 17 surprises for your mate, children, parents, or best friends. The 17 surprises can be plotted on a calendar waiting to be launched at a time later.

Re-read your goals you set. Re-read them as things you have, or are in the midst of. (do this several times)

Take a bath to relax and try sleep again.

Take a shower to wake up.

Exercise.

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Work on a hobby, read a book, watch a happy video.

Meditate.

After doing all of these things, one of 2 things will happen. Either 1) you will be so tired you are able to fall back asleep. OR 2) the sun will be due to rise - rain or shine, and your day will be ready to move forward.

We spend a lot of time wasted... but there is much to do. The next time you have trouble sleeping try the above suggestions. And feel free to email the things that have worked for you—I am always happy to add to my list.

Until next time— All the best,

Kate

Kate Hufstetler is a well established personal and relationship coach who has helped many individuals like yourself to beat "the blues" and gain control over their lives. Her clients come from both the United States and overseas. She offers coaching services via email and phone consultations at flexible timing and financing to meet your every need. Through personal, business, spiritual mentorship, she could help you too! Please visit for available packages within your range:

Mommy & Baby: Nursing Questions & Answers

By Kirsten Hawkins

Q. How often should I nurse a newborn infant?

A. No fewer than 8 times per day, depending on how long he gives you at night. If he can go 4 hours, you'll probably see two feedings in between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. If you tank him up right before you go to bed, you may only have one.

Q. How often should I nurse an older baby?

A. Depending on your child's age, you should be on a 3–4 hour routine during the day. Remember, as your child gets older, the frequency of nursing sessions will drop off, but he will be eating more at each session. If you are committed to nursing past 6 months of age, it's not recommended that you drop below 5 feedings per day. If you believe your milk supply is waning and you don't want to stop breastfeeding, add a feeding or two to your daily routine in order to increase your milk supply

Q. How do I drop a feeding as my baby grows?

A. The most common changes are moms who want to switch from a 3 to a 3.5 hour routine or a 3.5 to a 4 hour routine, babies who are ready to drop their middle of the night feeding, or parents who are

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ready to stop the late–night feeding.

Most often you'll know when your baby is ready to switch by a change in his sleep patterns. A baby on a 3 hour routine typically takes 3 naps per day (morning, afternoon, late afternoon) and the switchover to a 3.5 hour routine will see a shortening of one of those naps or the dropping of the last nap of the day. Babies are generally ready for this switch by about 12 weeks of age.

Dropping the middle of the night feeding is most often accomplished by the baby himself between 7–14 weeks of age. You'll know your baby is ready when he doesn't wake you up until 6:00 a.m. or so, and you'll probably wake in a panic that morning, realizing you weren't beckoned in the middle of the night. He will require more food during the day from this point on, and your breasts will likely be overly full for several days, but it's all good!

Stopping the late night feeding is typically the trickiest to do. Many parents are reluctant to drop it, thinking that if they do, their baby will wake in the middle of the night, starving. If you think he cannot drop the feeding completely, back it up in 15–minute increments until you arrive at your desired time. If his last two feedings of the day are closer than your flexible schedule says it "should be," don't worry. It's a temporary fix, and that's what flexibility is all about. The routine serves you, not the other way around!

Kirsten Hawkins is a baby and parenting expert specializing new mothers and single parent issues. Visit

for more information on how to raising healthy, happy children.

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