

## Why do so many of us dream about flying, falling or being chased?

Most of us experience these so-called “typical dreams” during our lifetime. Around [three-quarters](#) of people dream of falling, for instance, and that rate is [similar across cultures](#).

So given the incredibly rich and complex creativity of the dreaming brain, why do some themes routinely appear?

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In REM sleep, brain wave activity increases to near waking levels, as do heart rate and blood pressure, and breathing becomes faster and irregular.

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But when the alert, REM-sleeping brain becomes aware of the paralysed body, typical dreams can rear their head.

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This means that when neurons responsible for waking you start to, well, wake up, so too do the neighbouring vestibular system cells, creating the sensation of being weightless, flying, falling — or even floating around as a disembodied head. As the reticular system becomes more activated, so too does the feeling of flying or falling.

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If you go to bed in a bad, stressed or unhappy mood, it might set the scene for a similarly themed falling dream — a bit like when I feel like I’m plummeting to my doom. But if you’re particularly happy, you might dream that you’re soaring through the night sky, looking at the stars.

**Read full, original post:** [Why dreams like flying, falling, being chased are so common, and how your brain creates them](#)