

ONE COMMON COMPLAINT: TWO DIFFERENT TREATMENTS. THIS MONTH: SLEEP PROBLEMS

Susan Findlay, 35, is a sponsorship manager from East Lothian

Severity and frequency of complaint I can wake up to ten times a night. It's been going on for about four years but it's become worse recently. I'm probably restless five nights a week.

What treatment did you try? A combination of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and hypnotherapy.

How has your complaint affected you and why have you sought treatment? I've always been a restless sleeper and I often struggle to get to sleep. I keep looking at the clock and I feel that I don't sleep soundly. I could easily sit up all night and sleep all day, but I try to get to bed before 11 o'clock every night. If I get to bed later I really struggle to get up in the morning and don't feel rested.

The therapist asked me about my sleep patterns and dreams. He asked if I had any recurring ones and there was a recurrent theme. He asked me how these dreams made me feel and told me to try an exercise where I imagined I was looking down on myself and on these emotions so that I felt removed from them – as if they were happening to someone else.

We had a really good discussion – it was more like a therapy session than hypnotherapy. I went along with no preconceptions and when the hypnotherapy part started it was more like a really deep kind of relaxed state rather than sleep – though I "woke up" and felt really alert when he counted me out of it and did feel as if I had been sleeping.

The initial session increased my understanding of my behaviour and how my mind works. He also gave me mental exercises to try at home and a CD to listen to, although he advised I shouldn't listen to it until three days after the first session. The second session was better and by the third session I went "under" very quickly. It was extremely effective.

The first two nights' sleep were much like my old sleep pattern, but since night three, I have slept so soundly. I feel as if I have woken up in exactly the same position in which I have fallen asleep.

I really feel now as if I've had a sound night's kip. I wake up well-rested, feeling refreshed and it's definitely easier to get up.

How long have after effects lasted? It's been great. I've slept well for nearly four weeks now.

How much? Two-hour-long initial consultation and combined first session costs £80. For long-lasting effect, an additional two sessions are recommended, which lasted approx 1.5 hrs and cost £60 each.

What to wear? Comfortable clothing.

Pleasantness 4/5

Effectiveness 5/5

Contact Exclusive Hypnotherapy, Chilvern Cottage, 10 Biggar Road, Edinburgh. Telephone: 0131-445 2485, or 07050 038 103. See the website at www.exclusivehypnotherapy.com

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