

CAN'T RELAX?  
HERE'S HOW TO GO TO SLEEP  
IN YOUR OWN BED  
Second Thoughts  
By J. B. Leftwich  
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The question that has plagued me, not just in my advance age but for a number of years, is why can I sleep soundly stretched out on the floor with a wooden footstool for a pillow then lie wide awake at 3 a.m. in my own bed?

Why can a person who can sleep peacefully in a straight back rocking chair designed for posture rather than comfort then spend 30 minutes adjusting his pillow and smoothing his pajamas in his comfortable bed? Why is it you find a church pew, which must have been designed to keep you awake and alert, so seductive that you have to prop open your eyelids to hear a sermon you want to hear?

Why can you drop off almost immediately in a recliner, sleep soundly with you head rolled to one side and with your mouth hanging open while drying to drought dimensions and with circulation to your legs aborted?

These are some of the questions science should look into immediately. Many of us can't wait around too long for the answers.

I suppose most people have designed methods of returning to sleep after popping awake at three o'clock in the morning. But if you need help, read on. Try naming the presidents and their dates in office. If this fails, try naming the first ladies. Then name the states in reverse alphabetical order and a city other than the capital in each state. If this doesn't bore you to sleep, nothing will.

My latest episode was just last night. At 2:30, I was awake and trying not to disturb her. Almost before I was fully alert, her deep breathing stopped. How can she tell when I awaken?

I am determined not to disturb her. Very gently, I untwist my pajama leg. Then I quietly fluff my pillow. Then I turn over. Now, I'll go back to sleep. I'll just name the cities and towns in Tennessee.

*Algood, Alcoa, Ashland City, Ardmore, Adams.*

My hipbone seems to be pressing too hard against the mattress. I'll shift position. Just a little. There.

*Baxter, Bruceton, Bartlett, Bemis, Byrdstown, Brownsville.*

I wonder why my ankle bones rub against each other. I'll uncross them.

“Whatsa matter?” she asks.

“Oh, nothing, I’m just getting comfortable.”

She lets the subject drop, and I resume naming the cities.

*Cookeville, Crossville, Chattanooga, Camden, Clarksville, Carthage.*

Is that a mosquito I hear? Did it light on my forehead?

Maybe I’d better whack it.

“Now, what? she asks.

“ I heard a mosquito, and I tried to kill it.”

“You didn’t hear a mosquito. Without your hearing aid, you couldn’t hear a jet airplane. Go on to sleep.”

*Dyersburg, Dresden, Dover, Elizabethton, Etowah, Erwin.*

Some lint settles on my nose. I’ll twitch my nose and scrunch my cheeks.

“What are you doing now?”

How did she know I was doing anything? Can she hear me twitch my nose and scrunch my cheeks?

*Franklin, Fayetteville, Gallatin, Gatinsburg, Cookeville, Crossville.*

Oops, I messed up. How did Cookeville and Crossville get into the G’s. I’ll start over.

*Algood, Alcoa, Ashland City, Ardm.....*

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