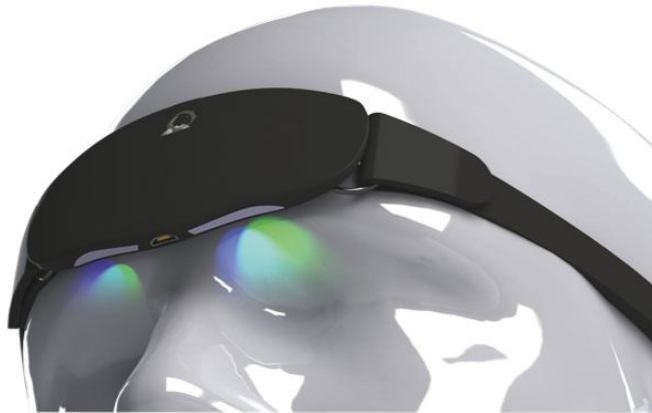


AURORA DREAM ENHANCING HEADBAND

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Submitted by James Lloyd

Fancy battling fire-breathing dragons from the comfort of your bed? We preview the Aurora headband, which claims to let you control your dreams and conjure up your wildest fantasies...

Our dreams may seem strange, bizarre, and even scary at times, but imagine if you were able to take control of them, and actually influence what went on. You'd effectively become all-powerful, and be able to act out your wildest fantasies. And that's the promise of the iWinks [Aurora Dream-Enhancing Headband](#).



The Aurora trains you to lucid dream by shining lights at you while you sleep

The people behind it say that it helps you lucid dream – this is the state where you become aware that you're dreaming. It might only happen for a couple of seconds at first, but with persistence you can train yourself to extend this, and to become more aware while you dream. And the more aware you are, the more you can take control of what's going on.

Here's how it works. You strap on the iWinks Aurora headband and settle down for a night's kip. The Aurora watches you while you sleep, so it knows when you're entering rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, and hence are most likely to dream. It monitors your brainwaves and eye movements, and uses an accelerometer to tell when you're moving least and hence in deep sleep.

Once you're fully under, the Aurora goes to work. It plays a series of flashing lights and sounds that appear in your dream. When you recognise them, you become aware that you're dreaming, and hence can take control, and start doing what you want. That's the theory, anyway.

There are some caveats. This device is no guarantee you'll be able to lucid dream. Some nights you might not even enter REM sleep. Even if you do, there's a chance the lights and sound will wake you up, rather than make you aware you're dreaming. But the Aurora is more advanced than most rival devices.

For a start, you can customise the lights' colours and flashing patterns, and adjust their brightness. So if you're a light sleeper you can set them low so they're less likely to wake you up. The Aurora also detects when you enter REM sleep and kicks in then, whereas some previous devices just take a guess, which is usually off the mark. It connects to your smartphone wirelessly over Bluetooth too, so you can insert your own sounds into your dreams.



Take control of your dreams with the Aurora headband... just pray you don't have a nightmare

Still, some experts are sceptical. Ian Wallace is a dream psychologist and author of *The Top 100 Dreams*. He says the Aurora will be a bit hit and miss. "If learning to lucid dream is like riding a bike, then this device is like training wheels," he says. "Getting the right light intensity will take a bit of trial and error, especially as how lightly you sleep varies from night to night."

But he stresses it's no replacement for the proper mental preparation. "The key thing with lucid dreaming is you need to train yourself psychologically, and a device like this can't replace that. The Aurora may help, sometimes, but don't expect it to do all the work for you."

It might not be quite the wonder gadget we hoped for, but it is still one of the most advanced of its kind. As for a device that lets us take full control of our dreams every single night without fail, we'll have to keep dreaming.