

# “STRESS KEPT ME AWAKE”



*Paula Richardson, 42, began suffering from insomnia when she was going through a particularly stressful time*

*in her life. She lives in London and works as a book-keeper.*

“After separating from my husband two years ago, I had to look for a smaller house for myself and my two boys of 10 and 12. I felt terribly stressed, and would lie awake for hours at night, worrying about everything I had to do and anxious at how the boys would cope with all the changes. I’d fall asleep with no problem, but would wake up at 1 am and not be able to get back to sleep.

By the time I found a house, six weeks later, I was a sleep-deprived zombie existing on just three hour’s sleep a night. I tried over-the-counter remedies, but they made me so sluggish the next day that I stopped. Then, a friend recommended a hypnotherapist she knew of, who often treated people with insomnia, so, in desperation, I decided to give it a go.

The hypnotherapist instantly put me at ease, before asking me about my sleep patterns and anxieties. She then put me into a state of hypnosis by talking very

soothingly and slowly. She asked me which colour I associated with calmness and told me to mentally surround myself with that colour, while thinking about how well I had slept as a baby. She told me to visualise myself lying in bed and to ‘breathe out’ my anxieties, putting them to one side, into a temporary box where they would be safe until I wanted to unlock the box and address the worries later on.

I felt incredibly relaxed but also completely aware of what was going on. The session took an hour, but felt more like 15 minutes. Afterwards, I felt calm and highly energised. The hypnotherapist had recorded the session and gave me a CD to take home with me. I played it when I went to bed that night – and only listened for about 20 minutes before I fell into a deep, restful sleep for nine hours. It was the first time I’d slept through the night in years. Now I know that no matter what is going on in my life, I will be able to sleep soundly with the help of my CD!”

• *Paula went to Clinical Hypnotherapist Lynda Hudson. For more information, or to buy one of Lynda’s ‘Sleep’ CDs or MP3 downloads, go to [firstwayforward.com](http://firstwayforward.com) or call 020 8402 1928. One-to-one sessions cost £125 each.*