

ASMR: Videos that put you to sleep, in a good way!

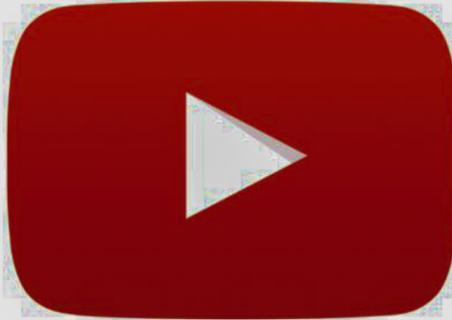
NOOHA SABANTA MAULA

If you've ever felt a tingly sensation going down your spine, you've experienced the trigger ASMR videos on YouTube aim to induce. I discovered ASMR videos while binge-watching makeup tutorials during wedding season last winter. A video title claimed that it was a 'doing makeup on you' video with 'lots of tapping', 'binaural whispers' and 'tingles'. Curiosity made me click on that particular video and consequently sent me down the rabbit hole.

ASMR stands for autonomous sensory meridian response and basically refers to a tingling or static-like sensation that usually spreads from the head or the spine to the rest of the body. The individuals who make these videos on YouTube refer to themselves as 'ASMRtists' and these videos are said to be made for the purpose of relaxation and helping people fall asleep. From looking at the comments, it appeared to me that many considered it to be therapeutic and so I gave

them a shot.

The makeup video I mentioned earlier was pretty weird initially. ASMR videos often have the person in the video very up close to the camera to give the impression that whatever they're doing is happening in front of you or to you. The position of the camera, paired with the whispering, caught me by surprise, but there was something oddly satisfying about the voice so I kept on watching. Soon enough, the tingling kicked in and while not every stimulus worked, a few did and I did feel quite sleepy by the end of that 20 minute long video. Over the next few weeks, I poked around YouTube to see what else existed in this category and I was quite amazed to find that these videos exist in a huge diversity. There are ASMR videos for



pretty much everything from 'hanging out with a friend outside a party' to 'stargazing' and from 'hair spa' to 'ear cleaning'. There are roleplay videos with everything from Mean Girls to Disney characters - literally whatever floats your boat. Some of these videos feature another person on

whom the 'triggers' are acted upon, with microphones picking up the sounds to make the tingles happen. Others are just enactments in which you are the person being virtually acted upon. The visual stimulus from the videos is referred to as visual ASMR.

Did these videos always work? No. Not every video works for everyone in my opinion. Some triggers and some voices drove me up the wall instead of making me feel relaxed. Some videos were not visually pleasing.

However, if a video managed to hit the sweet spot, it put me to sleep within 10-15 minutes and this was helpful on days when I had trouble sleeping. It's important to remember, though, that ASMR is not substitute for therapy or made by certified individuals. It's definitely something that is trending on YouTube now and some magazines have even made celebrities experiment with objects to make ASMR videos.

If you're looking for a quick fix, you can give the videos a chance. As ASMR triggers are very subjective, I have refrained from making any recommendations so far. A quick search on YouTube will lead you to hundreds of videos and channels of ASMRtists. A trial and error process should help you find videos that work for you.

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You can't beat the heat but you can surely try

MITHI CHOWDHURY

There was a time when the thought of summer brought forth memories of ice cream and lazy afternoons spent sipping iced drinks. Distant memories now, I'm sure, but there's nothing like a few creative hacks to keep the heat down and the afternoons somewhat-chilled - so here's a few fast fixes you can try around the house:

CHILL YOUR...BED?

'Tis the season when a good night's sleep is more elusive than a rickshaw in the apocalyptic wasteland that is Banani. But alas, I persevere. A quick pinterest search introduced me to soft gel ice packs, which can be slipped between the sheets to cool your mattress. Don't message your trusty online delivery service just yet; here's a no-fuss alternative - fill up one of those familiar flat hot-water flasks with ice-cold water instead.

ICY SHEETS

Stick your sheets and pillow cases in the freezer for a few hours before hitting the hay. Granted, this won't keep you cool all night but it does provide a brief respite from the heat. I recommend placing them in plastic bags first - unless your favourite aroma therapy fragrance is frozen chicken curry from the night before.



DIY FACE MIST

You can keep your skin hydrated throughout summer by adding essential oils of your choice to a travel-sized spray bottle containing water. I add three drops of tea tree oil - a miracle cure for acne - to a 12

ml perfume bottle filled with water You can replace this concoction with any essential oil/serum of your choice. Store it in the fridge, and pop it in your bag so you can use it on the go. Try it - the skin benefits are profound.

"PANI KHAO"

Water is without a doubt a cure to many problems. Take it from me - I carry two bottles of water everywhere I go. While 7 glasses a day is an ideal I aspire to, I often forget to stick to this rule. Instead, I find myself frequenting streetside juice stalls to quench my thirst for a more refreshing alternative. To put an end to this unsanitary love story (and save a few bucks), I've opted to carry iced lemonade (or any other fruit juice) in a sip-flask. There's nothing better to refresh yourself in this unbearable heat.

GO OLD-SCHOOL

Temperatures are mounting...and so is the pressure to stick your head in the freezer. If, like me, you're one of the unlucky souls without air conditioning in your room, now's the best time to invest in portable fans. Position a fan across from a window, so that the wind from outside and the fan combine to form a refreshing cross-breeze. Make a DIY air conditioner by positioning a shallow pan or bowl filled with ice in front of a fan. The breeze will pick up cold water from the ice's surface as it melts, creating a cooling mist.

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