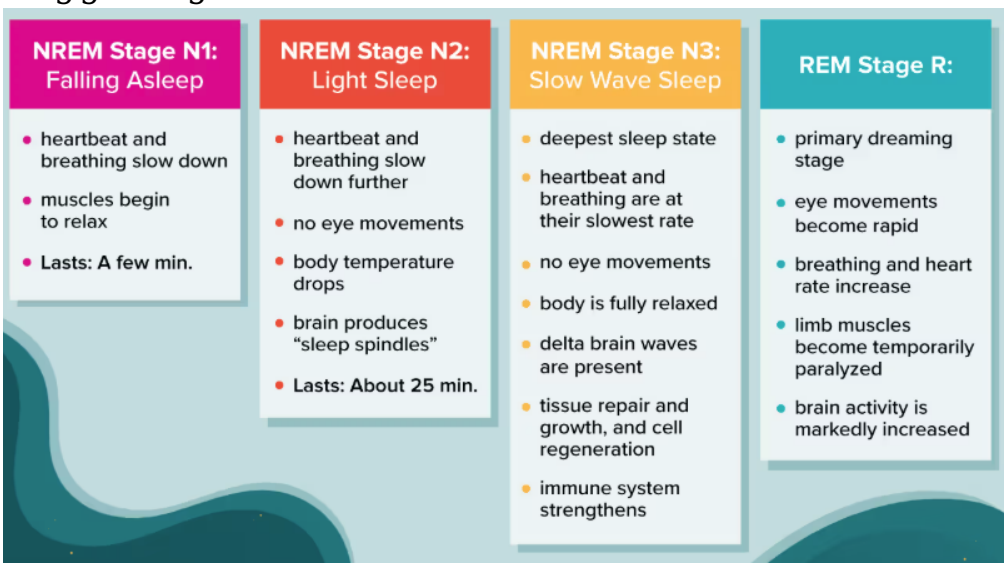
# Hypnic Jerks

## Why in news?

*A recent study estimated that 80% or more people experience hypnic jerks at some point in life.*

- **Hypnic Jerks** – They are **involuntary muscle twitches or spasms** that occur as a person transition from wakefulness to sleep.
- They are not a medical disorder but a normal physiological response.
- **Occurrence** – Most commonly during the first or second stage of sleep.
- The brain interprets the body's muscle relaxation as a sign of falling, triggering a sudden Contraction.




- **Prevalence** – Their frequency and intensity can vary from person to person and more than 80% experience it.
- **Evolutionary origins** – Theories suggests that hypnic jerks are evolutionary leftovers.
- Which means our ancestors who slept on trees may have benefited from these spasms as a safety check against falling.
- **Body-Brain disconnect theory** – During sleep transition, the brain slows down while muscles relax.
- Sometimes, mixed signals from the brain lead to muscle twitching as a false alarm.
- **Common triggers** – Stress and anxiety are significant contributors.
- Caffeine, sleep deprivation, and intense physical activity close to bedtime

can also trigger jerks.

- **Typical sensation experienced** – Often feels like falling, tripping, or jerking awake suddenly.
- It can be accompanied by vivid dream-like imagery, like falling off a cliff or stumbling.
- **Implications** – No, hypnic jerks are harmless and normal.
- However, frequent or intense jerks might disrupt sleep quality or cause sleep anxiety in some individuals.
- **Management** – Stress management through meditation, yoga, deep breathing and avoid caffeine late in the day.
- **Sleep hygiene –** Maintain a regular sleep schedule and limit screen time before bed.

**Reference**

The Hindu| Hypnic Jerks

