

How Self Hypnosis Puts us Back in Touch

Relax, we are told, time and again. But it does not always work - the body wants to relax, but the mind is not sure. Sometimes our mind becomes overactive and does not allow us the rest we need. The danger of letting our minds run on unchecked is that we could be inadvertently creating all kinds of problems for ourselves. Self hypnosis is a safe and easy way to go beyond mere relaxation. It allows you to become calm enough to give the deepest recesses of your mind a message it will answer.

It is a great, but often overlooked, therapeutic tool. The benefits are very real, including:

- better self stress management
- greater ability to withstand pain
- improved health and immune system function
- improved clarity of thought
- greater control of your mood
- ability to overcome negative habits

Even if you use it just to restore energy, it may be enough to help you face your problems with greater insight.



Getting Started

All you have to do is go into deep relaxation and then stay aware enough to direct the flow of images. Doing this enables you to have a dialogue with those sometimes difficult or inaccessible parts of yourself that often create sabotage in your life. Through words and images anyone can learn to speak the language of the unconscious and gain a greater degree of control over your habits, beliefs and values and thus your life.

I have known how to use self-hypnosis for over three decades now but it only recently that I realised its vast potential for connecting the imagination to our daily life. It's like being a practical dreamer. You make your dreams work for you. Once you gain control of the constant inner self talk, you become more able to influence aspects of your life that would otherwise have become fixed and out of reach.

Brain Research

A 1967 study by stress researcher Edmund Jacobson found that visualising an activity produces small but measurable reactions in the muscles involved in the imagined activity. He said, 'an anxious mind cannot exist in a relaxed body'. Repeated mental rehearsal implants the learned memory of a successful action, and also conditions the unconscious mind with the outcome you expect to achieve.



Bear in mind also that a number of studies show that the brain does not distinguish between real and imagined experience. This is amazing as it means that when you imagine yourself doing something, you can get the same physiological reactions as when you actually do them. Great athletes are already aware of this secret and use it to excel in performance.

Self Hypnosis Steps

Make a strong intention to change something. It's best to plan it first. Write it down, and then read it back to yourself. Even better, make a recording of it, so you can relax and just listen to the sound of your own voice on headphones. Take about half an hour for one session. When you are ready, find a safe, comfortable place to begin. Be sure you will not be disturbed. Basically there should be four clear stages to your self hypnosis talk or self prepared script.

1) Relaxing

This is the bit where you tell your body to relax. You go from the normal waking state to an internally focussed state. Your body should soon start to feel limp and compliant. Closing the eyes is usually associated with this state so allow your eyes to close gently. I normally use a full body scan, from toe to head, including bits of our bodies we usually forget about e.g. soles of the feet, scalp, eye lashes, fingernails, the jaw. Just go with the relaxation.



2) Going Deeper into Trance

This is the bit where once you are relaxed you tell your body to go even deeper. This is beyond mere relaxation. I like to go to my favourite beach, down a big flight of stairs, or circle down a spiral staircase, or take a lift from a tall building down into the basement. The idea is to really enjoy the sensation of deepening and the body numbness. You will know once you are there. Enjoy it, but remain aware throughout. This is not sleeping. Take all the time it takes to notice fully that it's really nice to go even deeper. Then, don't hesitate to go even further until you are fully in a deep trance.

3) Seeing What you Want

This is the fun bit where you get to see hear feel, realise in your imagination in great detail every bit of the goal you want. This could be confidence, or accelerated learning, more productivity at work, or a slimmer body. Make it so it seems real to you and believable. Enjoy each moment as this is the bit that joins the dots to the subconscious mind and leaves the imprint that will bring you closer to your dream. Frame each idea positively, work with your imagination and use positive language. See the results not the problems. Also it is useful to use the present tense, to imagine your goals as already happening around you. 'I feel full on a very light meal,' and 'I feel happy with the body I have', not 'I don't feel hungry anymore' or 'I am no longer overweight.' Avoid the words 'no' and 'don't' as your brain will only focus on what you don't want.



4) Coming Back

This is easy. Once you have done all you want in the goals phase, you decide to come back. You can count back 5 -1 or just be aware of sounds in the room again. Make your voice louder and more energetic as you waken yourself. This should restore you back to normal feeling fresh and revitalised.

Well done, you have just completed your first session of self hypnosis. Make a note in your diary of any changes that you notice and repeat sessions as needed.

Summary

Make sure your self hypnosis is about something that you really want to change and that your intention is strong enough to carry you through, even to repeat sessions. Write your script in four stages as suggested: 1) Relax; 2) Go Deeper; 3) Your Goals; 4) Return. Switch off your phone and give at least half an hour to each session. Do it in a secluded area where you will not be disturbed. Be patient on waiting for or noticing any changes. Do it as often as needed to tackle any issues that need working on. Finally, remember to note your results and being enjoying the fruits of this powerful technique.

