

# SELF-HYPNOSIS

## For Improved Sleep

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*"Trust your unconscious; it knows more than you do"*

Milton Erickson

## WHAT IS HYPNOSIS?

Hypnosis typically involves a highly trained therapist leading a person into a relaxed state, by using therapeutic words or phrases and techniques, such as guided relaxation, music and visualization. These tools and techniques enable a person to tap into resources within themselves that they cannot reach when fully conscious. The Society of Psychological Hypnosis defines hypnosis as "a state of consciousness involving focused attention and an enhanced capacity for responding to suggestions". Humans move in and out of a light hypnotic state naturally throughout their normal waking day, e.g. while daydreaming or losing track of time while absorbed in an activity.

## HYPNOSIS HISTORY

Hypnosis dates back to the late 18th century when Franz Mesmer, a German physician, developed 'Mesmerism'. After him, in 1843, a Scottish ophthalmologist, James Braid, coined the word 'hypnosis', originating from the Greek word for 'sleep'. Then, around 1850s, Josef Breuer's worked with Sigmund Freud, both uncovering the power of hypnosis in psychoanalysis and the release of buried emotion. However, it was Milton Erickson who developed contemporary hypnosis, by using language creatively in order to communicate with patients' unconscious, with great success.

In a Nutshell

## Clearing up Misconceptions

The TRUTH is....

- Hypnosis cannot be forced on a person or make them do something against their will
- Everyone experiences hypnosis in varying degrees in everyday living
- It's a natural state; it's not magic, as portrayed in stage hypnosis
- Hypnosis has a robust scientific framework.
- Clinical research proves its benefits
- You cannot get stuck in hypnosis. You simply get bored and/or open your eyes

## The Many Benefits of Hypnosis

Hypnosis promotes particular brainwave activity that calms brain regions that help control autonomic functions, like heart rate, blood flow, and breathing. Hypnosis can generate improvement in physical relaxation, anxiety, stress and insomnia. Researchers believe that hypnosis allows the mind to take in and adopt new ideas, by accessing the 'unconscious mind', which is more open than the rational 'conscious mind'. Clinicians use hypnosis as a way to deliver therapy (hypnotherapy) that can help the patient with smoking cessation, weight loss, sleep and many more issues.

*Hypnosis itself is not a therapy, it's a tool that facilitates the delivery of therapy*



## So What Does Hypnosis FEEL Like?

Hypnosis creates a state of deep bodily relaxation while your mind moves into an altered state of consciousness, your focus narrows, your mind is very active and your sense of time distorts. It's similar to meditation or daydreaming. This 'trance', or hypnotic state, results in **a powerful combination of dissociation, immersion,**

**and openness to suggestion and creative thinking, new concepts and pathways to resolutions.**

During hypnosis, conscious awareness and response to external stimuli diminishes. Many people describe deep hypnosis as feeling like their active mind is detached from their body and that all physical surroundings disappear. After hypnosis, you will remember very little about what's been said, or thought. However, you will be aware of everything **while** hypnotized. Hypnosis is easy to end; you can simply open your eyes. After a short period of readjustment, usually a few minutes, you will return to your usual conscious self. When you 'wake' from hypnosis, you may have a 'dreamy' feeling, similar to emerging from a daydream or a light nap. Brainwave activity during hypnosis and sleep are similar, however your brain is doing very different things **between** both of these states. Suggestions, or therapy, undertaken during hypnosis (hypnotherapy) can take time to realize, while the conscious mind processes the changes that the unconscious mind has experienced while under hypnosis.

Regular hypnosis increases your ability to be hypnotized more quickly, deeply and effectively.

Risks

- *The mind, under hypnosis, has the potential to create false memories; 'confabulations'.*
- *Some people get headaches, dizziness & anxiety, but these usually fade shortly after hypnosis ends*
- *For people with mental health complications, such as psychosis or a personality disorder, hypnosis may make their condition worse.*
- *Do not use hypnosis when using alcohol or drugs.*

### How Can Self-Hypnosis Help?

*Many people use self-hypnosis to manage stress, anxiety, to cope with life's challenges and improve their physical and emotional health. Self-hypnosis can be used in two ways:*

- a. to send you to sleep*
- b. to improve something in your life, e.g. sleep habits, confidence or goal visualization.*

### How to self-hypnotize for improved sleep...

1. Put on comfortable clothes and find a quiet place to relax where you'll not be disturbed. Turn off your phone & blow out any candles. Uncross your arms & legs. Close your eyes at any time. Play calm, soft music if you wish.
2. Think of 1 or 2 simple, clear statements (post-hypnotic suggestions) about what you can do differently to improve your sleep; these will be the statements you say to yourself during hypnosis. e.g.: "if I wake in the night, I will easily fall back to sleep again" or "I will drop off into sleep so easily tonight"
3. Begin by breathing in slowly through your nose, & exhaling through your mouth. Continue for at least 5 mins.
4. Then, very mindfully, begin a progressive muscle relaxation by visualizing tension dissolving or evaporating away from your body. Start by focusing on your head, shoulders and neck, move down to your back, arms and fingers, stomach and chest, then legs, feet and toes, focusing on releasing tension in each area, one by one.
5. Then, again, breathe in slowly through your nose, and exhale through your mouth for a few more minutes.
6. When you feel completely calm, think about your statements. Repeat them while visualizing yourself doing them, visualize how you will feel once you have made the changes. Go into detail. Notice everything about these 'scenes'. Note what you can hear, feel, touch, see, smell... Take your time in this phase.
7. When you feel ready to withdraw from your hypnotic state, count yourself up from 0 - 5, slowly at first and then with more energy and volume as you approach 5, while taking deep breaths in of imaginary 'ice cold' air.  
Give yourself time to adjust to your surroundings.  
Repeat often.... you'll get better at it!

Just To Be Sure

If you experience prolonged sleep issues, consult a GP or healthcare provider to ensure you don't have an underlying health condition contributing to your poor sleep.