Mastering Self-Hypnosis to Improve Your Mind

Cindy Locher, BCH
Self-hypnosis induces a state of extreme relaxation and increased suggestibility to treat a host of mental and physical conditions. Learn how it can help you.

The word hypnosis conjures up images of swinging pendulums and audiences being made to cluck like chickens.

But hypnosis is much more than an amusing magician’s trick.

It’s a medically recognized technique that uses innate mental powers to promote all kinds of mental and physical improvements.

A variety of health care professionals are trained in hypnotherapy — doctors, nurses, psychotherapists, dentists and chiropractors.
With self-hypnosis, you don’t have to rely on someone else to guide you into this powerful mental state.

Let’s examine how hypnosis and self-hypnosis work, how you can use them to improve your mind and mental well-being, and how you can put yourself into a hypnotic state of consciousness at will.

How Does Hypnosis Work?

Hypnosis is a trance-like state that’s characterized by extreme relaxation, increased suggestibility, and heightened imagination.

It is not completely understood how hypnosis works, but here are a few prevailing theories.

Hypnosis may work by changing electrical patterns of brain function known as brain waves.

Using electroencephalographs (EEGs), measurable changes in brainwave patterns have been detected.

During hypnosis you are in the theta brainwave state — the same state experienced during daydreaming, deep meditation, and light sleep.

Another theory is that during hypnosis the conscious mind takes a backseat to the subconscious mind allowing you or your therapist to work directly with the subconscious.

And lastly, it’s been noted that under hypnosis, activity in the left side of the brain goes down while activity in the right side goes up.
What Is Self-Hypnosis?

Hypnosis was originally called mesmerism, as in the word “mesmerize.”

If you’ve ever found yourself mesmerized or entranced by a crackling fire, ocean waves, or ripples in a pond, you’ve experienced self-hypnosis.

You would have felt profoundly relaxed, lost in your thoughts, and temporarily unaware of the rest of the world.

Self-hypnosis occurs when you intentionally put yourself in this state without the help of a hypnotherapist.
All Hypnosis Is “Self” Hypnosis

In a way, the term self-hypnosis is redundant since, in fact, all hypnosis is self-induced.

Dr. Milton Erickson, widely regarded as “the father of hypnosis,” considered all hypnosis self-hypnosis.

Unlike in the movies, where the villain hypnotizes his subject to do things she would never normally do, no one can hypnotize you if you aren’t willing.

A hypnotist or hypnotherapist merely facilitates the process.

But you are fully capable of achieving the same state on your own.

Most people inadvertently hypnotize themselves several times a day.

Most of us have driven a car while in a hypnotic state!

"Highway hypnosis" occurs when you suddenly find yourself at your destination with no recollection of those last few miles.

But that’s not as frightening as it sounds since you were essentially driving on autopilot and your subconscious is a pretty good driver.
Don't Worry, You're In Control

One persistent myth about hypnosis is that you lose control of yourself — that you can be made to do things you don’t want to do or that you can get stuck in trance, unable to get out of it.

A good comparison to being hypnotized is being thoroughly absorbed in a good book or movie.

You become so focused you’re barely aware of your surroundings, but in no way have you lost control of yourself.

And you can easily snap back to reality at any time.
Benefits of Hypnosis

Hypnosis has been acknowledged as a valid medical therapy since the 1950s.

A surprisingly wide variety of health care professionals integrate hypnotherapy into their practice: psychologists, psychiatrists, mental health counselors, doctors, anesthesiologists, nurses, dentists, and chiropractors.

Hypnosis is used to reduce stress, improve emotional well-being, and treat a wide variety of mental and neurological disorders.

The benefits of hypnosis have been established for the following:

- addictions of all kinds
- anxiety
- dementia
- depression
- epilepsy
- improved concentration and focus
- insomnia and sleep disorders
- memory improvement
- migraine headaches
- phobias
- post-traumatic stress disorder
- self-esteem issues
- sexual problems
- stress relief
- Tourette syndrome
  ....and more
Hypnosis for Anxiety and Stress Relief

A huge volume of research shows proven benefits of hypnosis for anxiety and other disorders with a stress-related component.

Hypnosis can help with situational anxiety such as fear of public speaking or of taking exams.

It is useful for people with medical-related anxiety such as that experienced during or before dental procedures, surgery, chemotherapy, or other medical tests and treatments.

It can minimize the symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder and panic attacks.

It’s been successfully used for a long list of chronic disorders that can be aggravated by stress such as asthma, high blood pressure, fibromyalgia, tension headaches, migraines, chronic pain, eating disorders, bruxism and irritable bowel syndrome.

Hypnosis for a Better You

Hypnosis isn’t just a tool to be kept in your back pocket and pulled out when you’ve got a problem.

Hypnosis can be used to improve any area of life.

It’s most commonly used to lose weight, quit smoking, sleep better, or for general stress relief.
But it’s equally useful to increase productivity and concentration, improve confidence and self-esteem, and enhance relationships.

Some of the most successful and creative people of all time used hypnosis to help them attain their place in history including Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, and Winston Churchill.

Sports legends like Tiger Woods and the entire LA Lakers basketball team use hypnosis to achieve peak performance.

You can use hypnosis to help you be whatever you want to be — happier, healthier, and more successful.

**How to Hypnotize Yourself**

Self-hypnosis is often compared to meditation since both induce a state where your thinking and mental processing decrease while relaxation and focus increase.

Research shows that hypnosis promotes similar effects in the nervous system.

But hypnosis takes you one step further by using this highly suggestible state to reprogram your mind using techniques like guided imagery, affirmations, and NLP (neurolinguistic programming).

There are many self-hypnosis formats to choose from.

There are self-hypnosis scripts that you can perform from memory or record and follow along to your own voice.

There are prerecorded self-hypnosis sessions you can listen in the form of MP3s or self-hypnosis apps.
But whatever self-hypnosis technique you use, your success depends on your motivation, and your ability to relax and concentrate on one specific goal.

Get Started with This Simple Self-Hypnosis Script

I’ve provided a more comprehensive guide to creating your own self hypnosis practice later in this ebook. To familiarize you with the process, here’s a simple, basic self-hypnosis script you can use to get started:

1. Sit comfortably with your feet on the floor and your hands on your lap.

2. Take 3 deep breaths, in through your nose, out through your mouth.

3. On the third breath, close your eyes and continue to breathe, deeply focusing on your breath.

4. Now slowly count down from 10 to 1 with each breath. After each number, think the word “deeper” or "relax" to nudge you into a state of deeper relaxation.

5. After you reach 1, repeat a positive, affirming statement to yourself that you’ve decided on beforehand.
6. Repeat that statement to yourself for as long as you wish, usually a few minutes.

7. "Future pace" yourself by imagining that you’re in the future having already achieved your goals. Let it feel real and notice all the sights, sounds and feelings of having reached your goal. This increases your motivation and focus!

8. When you are done sit quietly for a moment, then slowly count from 1 to 5, visualizing energy returning to your body.


Self-Hypnosis Tips

If you are unsure about what to use as your mantra during your session, you can’t go wrong with this famous all-encompassing autosuggestion by French psychologist Emile Coue:

“Every day, in every way, I’m getting better and better.”

Whatever you decide your mantra to be, don’t just repeat it by rote.

Muster up intention and emotion.

Visualize the results in your mind’s eye.

Imagine what achieving that result will feel like.

And always make it a positive statement.

For example, if you’re using self-hypnosis for anxiety you’d want to repeat “I am calm and relaxed,” not “I’m no longer stressed and anxious.”
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Choosing Self-Hypnosis Tracks

It’s not always easy to do this completely on your own.

Sometimes the stress of trying to remember what to do next can interfere with your ability to completely let go.

That’s why I recommend using a pre-recorded hypnosis session.

You can find both free and paid self-hypnosis MP3s and apps.

A scientific review of hypnosis apps concluded that in general you get what you pay for.

Of the over 400 apps reviewed on iTunes, none had been tested for effectiveness and few were created by anyone trained or certified in hypnosis or hypnotherapy.
While these probably won’t do you any harm, the consensus is that they probably won’t do you much good either.

For true hypnosis benefits, stick to audio files developed by a professional with hypnosis training and accreditation.

HypnosisFirst.com is one company that offers self-hypnosis MP3 audio downloads created by a board-certified hypnotherapist and master NLP practitioner.

**When to Seek Out a Hypnosis Professional**

If you have a serious mental health disorder, it’s recommended that you seek the help of a trained professional to get results.

Anyone can call themselves a hypnotist, and hypnotherapists aren’t state licensed to handle serious mental health disorders.

If you live in the US or Canada, you can find a hypnotherapist in your area using Psychology Today’s referral service.

Choose your state, city or zip code, then select “treatment orientation” in the sidebar.

There you’ll find “hypnotherapy” as one of the options.

An additional benefit of your hypnotherapist being a licensed health care professional is that you may be able to get your sessions paid for by health insurance.
Establishing Your Practice

Self-hypnosis can be useful for everything from general stress relief to addressing serious mental and physical health concerns.

You can create your own script or use free MP3s or apps, but for best results, stick with versions created by trained hypnosis professionals.

If you're ready to go into more depth on how to construct and conduct your own self hypnosis sessions, this section will show you how!

It’s important to have everything in the right place (physically and mentally) before you start your session. Below are some things to consider before you begin.

Identify Your Interruptions Before Starting

Interruptions are going to be inevitable. Once you accept that, it will make your life a lot easier!

It’s always important to let your family and friends know that you will be busy for the next half hour or so. And if you think you will be receiving random texts from your friend about a Game of Thrones episode, then it is best to turn your phone completely off. Later in the guide I will discuss how to use the sounds around you (birds chirping, dogs barking, cars honking) to take you deeper into hypnosis, but when it comes to a cell phone going off, the simple fact that it is usually someone on the other end saying, “hey, you need to respond!” will almost always take you out of hypnosis.
Your pets can also be a nuisance. Most people find it best to keep the dog or cat outside the room until the session is over. However, if you have a calm pet that can keep still and not bother you, then it does no harm to share the moment.

**Set the Scene**

We, as humans, go in and out of hypnosis thousands of times throughout our lifetime. We do it multiple times a day while driving, reading a book, etc. Because of this, there is no “right way” to prepare for hypnosis. Once you get better at going deep into trance you can establish a “hypnotic cue” and immediately go into a peaceful hypnotic state.

Yes, you can literally be on a crowded bus with kids yelling in every direction and instantly transport yourself to a beach in Cancun by saying a simple word! However, for the standard self-hypnosis experience it is a good idea to make it as perfectly peaceful as possible.

**Prepare Yourself**

Tell yourself silently or out loud that you are going to do self hypnosis. Then tell yourself silently or out loud how long you want to remain in the trance. Fifteen to twenty minutes is fine to begin with however, after a few weeks practise you may decide to make it last longer. For longer sessions, be sitting up as you practice, otherwise you may fall asleep.
Relax Your Body Take several deep, slow breaths. This type of breathing slows down the brain waves and automatically begins relaxing the body. As you breathe out imagine you are breathing away any nervous tension left in your body. Make sure you breathe diaphragmatically, so as you breathe in your stomach goes out, and as you breathe out your stomach goes in. You can also say the word *Relax* on every out breath if you wish. Continue this breathing pattern until you feel relaxed and ready to stop.

Relax Your Mind Distracting thoughts may come into your mind, allow them to float right out again without following them. Focus on your breathing or your relaxing body; hypnosis is all about heightened concentration, focus, and relaxation. Keep your mind on what you're doing.

Test Yourself Bring your attention to your closed eyelids. Relax those muscles so completely that you couldn't possibly relax them any more. Your muscles must do what your mind instructs, so tell yourself that your eyelids are so relaxed that even if you try to open them, they just won't move. Test yourself to make sure you cannot open your eyes (of course you'll be able to open them at any time, and you'll know that on a conscious level, but allowing your conscious mind to accept the suggestion that your eyelids are too relaxed to work is the gateway to hypnosis and the subconscious mind).

Go Deeper When you pass the "eye test," you are in a light to medium trance state. Silently and slowly count from 10 down to 1, imagining that your body and mind become more and more relaxed with each number. You may visualize yourself going down a staircase with each number, or on an elevator or escalator going down.
Give Yourself Suggestions
Always state suggestions as if they are a reality and in the present. This is very important as your subconscious mind believes exactly what it is told.

Silently repeat the suggestions over and over, being very direct, brief and positive. Work on this over about 3 weeks. Always work on one goal at a time. Now is the time to give yourself some positive suggestions or affirmations. You may decide the wording before you start or just have a very relaxed conversation with yourself; just make sure they all relate to one chosen goal at a time.

End Your Session  When you feel its time to end, slowly and mentally count up from 1 to 5. When you reach the number 5 your eyes will open and you will be wide awake with a feeling of well being all over. However if you practise before going to sleep do not count up from 1 to 5, tell yourself beforehand that it will turn into a natural deep sleep from which you will wake up in the morning feeling positive and refreshed.

Don’t worry if you try self hypnosis and don’t think much happened at first or you could not see much in the visualization. Suggestion are effective even in the lightest of trances, so you will see changes soon. Repetition is the key to getting a new pattern into the subconscious mind, so keep at it! We all get better with practice, and before long you’ll see just how easy and empowering it is to create the life, body, and bank account you want!
Self hypnosis is easy to learn and with practice and repetition, you'll be well on your way in no time!

Congratulations on choosing to use this powerful tool to improve your mind and your life!
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