

Hypnotherapy Factsheet

Hypnosis has existed in the plant and animal kingdom in one form or another since time began. In hibernating, animals 'turn inwards' and are able to exist for long periods of time without sustenance...

The art of hypnosis (people going into trance to heal themselves or to retrieve information) is as old as time itself, no-one knows for certain where the practice of hypnosis originated but it is known that ancient Egyptians used a form of it in their dream Temples.

So what is hypnosis.....?

Hypnosis is the ability of one to totally focus. Hypnosis is a deep state of relaxation and heightened awareness, similar to daydreaming or meditation. In this state of total relaxation the subconscious mind opens up to receive helpful and beneficial suggestions. When a hypnotherapist uses the trance process the critical faculty and the ego are bypassed which makes accepting suggestions even easier. Repeating suggestions during each session, and with multiple sessions, allows the newly incorporated changes to become permanent.

Although the hypnotic technique allows the hypnotist to bypass the conscious mind, it does not mean the client is incapable of rejecting one or more suggestion if they do not fit with the client's belief system. Remember no one can make you do something you don't want to do in hypnosis. Likewise, you will not do or say something in hypnosis that you would not say out of hypnosis. And, hypnosis is not a "truth serum" (a pathological liar is a liar, in or out of hypnosis).

Hypnosis is actually a very common state of being. Our minds go in and out of the "alpha level" of consciousness, which is that point right before we fall asleep, throughout the day. Whenever you "zone out" while driving your car, or get mesmerised by the television set or a Nintendo game or get "lost in space" in a deep daydream whilst washing dishes etc, you are in a state close to hypnosis. Patients in surgery and under anaesthesia are highly suggestible to the comments going on in the operating room. Names for specific types of hypnosis include progressive relaxation, anodyne imagery (pain control), nlp, pain control with guide imagery and painless childbirth.

In actuality all hypnosis is self-hypnosis. While in hypnosis clients allow their own inner minds to make changes, based on suggestions provided by the hypnotherapist. Therapist and clients agree to the particular courses of action during the pre-talk. Therefore, hypnosis is actually a team effort. And the success of the team depends on the co-operation and trust between the partners.

Hypnotherapy and eczema

So how can hypnotherapy help in controlling eczema symptoms? Firstly, pain is a signal, it's the body's warning system that protects us from damage or warns us that something is wrong. The brain has both pain and pleasure centres which are located in the limbic-hypothalamic region and hypnotherapy has been found to affect that region of the brain.

Pet scan studies show that muscular relaxation during hypnosis leads to the inhibition of pain transmission. Hypnotherapy has been proven to be most effective when used for both chronic and acute pain relief and management.

Frequently asked questions

Q. Do I have to remember things from my past in order to recover from my problem?

Not necessarily; different therapists have varied approaches, but if the cause of your problem is a repressed memory (one that you are unable to remember consciously), then bringing it back into conscious awareness can help you to view the problem from a different perspective and so feel differently about it.

Q. When I am 'under' will I be asleep?

You will be aware of everything that is happening and being said the whole time, however you will be so deeply relaxed that you may find yourself drifting into different levels of awareness. Remember, your subconscious mind is active throughout and it is this that your therapist is working with.

Q. Will I remember everything afterwards?

That depends how deep in hypnosis you are, but generally most people do remember either everything or certain parts of the experience. You will find that suggestions which have been given to you in hypnosis will resurface in your conscious, thinking mind after your hypnosis and these will be the thoughts that produce changes in your behaviour or way of thinking and feeling.

Q. Will I give away any secrets whilst I am hypnotized?

No, you won't say or do anything at all that you don't want to. If you were given suggestions that you didn't morally agree with you would come out of hypnosis.

Q. How do I know I will wake up from hypnosis?

No-one has ever remained in hypnosis indefinitely. Even if something were to happen to the hypnotherapist halfway through the session, you would still 'come out' of the trance state once rapport had been broken.

Q. Are there any side effects from hypnosis?

The only side effects are the beneficial ones of feeling more relaxed afterwards and feeling more positive about whatever it was you sought hypnotherapy for. Hypnosis is a perfectly natural state.

Q. What is hypnosis?

Hypnosis is a state of altered awareness during which our subconscious mind is more open and receptive to suggestions that are given. We drift in and out of different levels of awareness many times a day, absorbing information on a subliminal level as well as consciously. Your hypnotherapist will work with your imagination to help you to achieve your goals.

Q. How does it feel to be hypnotized?

Everyone is different. Some people say that their body feels like a lead weight, others say they feel as though they're floating away. Most people will agree that it's a lovely feeling because they are more relaxed than they have ever been before.

Q Can I be hypnotized against my will?

No, anyone can resist and it won't work. Hypnosis is cooperation between two people - your therapist will show you the way and you can choose if you want to go there or not.

Q. I went to a hypnotherapist once before and it didn't work. Does this mean I'm not able to be hypnotized?

The most common reason for failure to induce trance is lack of rapport.

Q. How do I know which hypnotherapist to choose?

It is important to choose a therapist that is registered with a recognised hypnotherapy body such as the General Hypnotherapy Register - <http://www.general-hypnotherapy-register.com/> with emphasis on training and proper insurance.

*** This factsheet was supplied by Monica Black, Master Clinical Hypnotherapist of Hampstead Hypnotherapy**