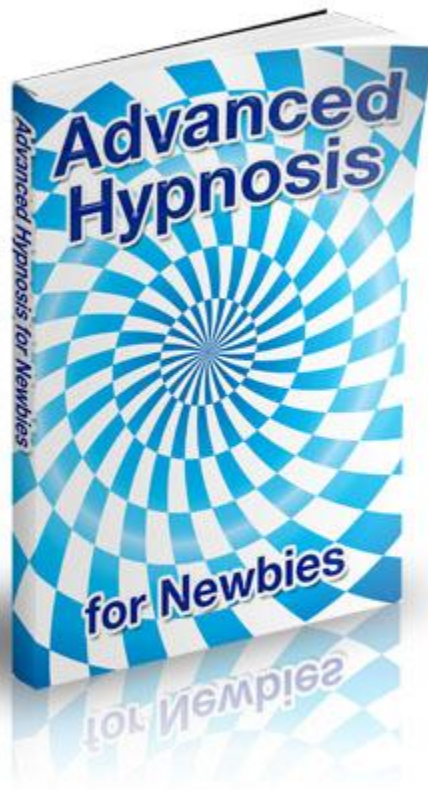


Advanced Hypnosis

An Introduction for Newbies

By Larry Hudson



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What is Hypnosis?

For anyone concerned that this is a report designed to teach readers how to convince crowds of people to act like chickens or dance to an unheard song just with a carefully placed keyword - relax. While hypnosis is often paraded in that form with large crowds visiting celebrity hypnosis experts to see what wonders they can perform, the majority of hypnosis used is to aid people seeking a solution to a problem they cannot resolve easily with any other method.

What Hypnosis is NOT

Like many things that have become popularized by celebrity, there are a few misconceptions about self hypnosis that are good to clear up at the start. Before we look at what self hypnosis IS, let's look at what it is NOT

Self hypnosis doesn't mean you are allowing someone to control your mind with a soundtrack. No one is able to control our mind. What it does do, is help us solve our own problems and answer our own questions. Trust our own strengths and power and know our mind isn't going to let just anyone take over!

Hypnosis is not the same as sleep. Whilst you move in and out of a hypnotic state as you fall asleep or awaken, hypnosis is that time between wakefulness and sleeping. That relaxed state as you drift between conscious and unconscious thought. You may sometimes fall asleep during or after a meditation, that is because you relax. Falling asleep during hypnosis often indicates the level of stress you are under - that you are having trouble relaxing on a long term basis and the hypnosis-induced sleep is simply your body telling you that it is sleep-deprived and needs to catch-up on sleep.

Hypnosis doesn't make the bad things go away. If you've been badly hurt or abused hypnosis won't make the memories go away. What it can do is rearrange your filing system a little. Hypnosis can put those bad thought patterns and memories in a place where they don't pop out every time you open your mind's storage cupboard. Instead it places it somewhere at the back of the highest shelf and puts the good thinking on the shelves within easy reach. It's a little like the way your mother may have put the cookie jar at the top of the cupboard when you were a child - you just couldn't get to it unless you put in a lot of effort. The best thing about hypnosis is the cookie jar might have some mouldy old bread in it, however, hypnosis puts some sweet and tasty good feelings within easy reach. You are far more likely to access the good bits before any of the bad stuff comes flooding back.

Hypnosis can not make you do anything you don't want to do. Your mind is far stronger than you may give it credit for. You can't be made to do or believe something you do not want to believe or do. This may be why some people find that self hypnosis doesn't have the expected results they were planning on. Before you begin any self hypnosis course, think about whether the new thinking patterns you are working towards are actually what you want to believe and change. For instance, some people say they want to give up smoking, though because they enjoy the social side of standing with other smokers, or the way it makes them feel more relaxed in social situations, they don't really want to let it go. It's important to find what it is you actually want to adapt change and replace, for optimum effectiveness.

It's Something You Already Do!

If you are currently struggling to keep focused on your goals, give up an addictive craving or want to achieve some heady outcome, then learning the basics of hypnotic suggestion may be an excellent solution.

The techniques used in self hypnosis are used by high performance athletes, successful movers and shakers in business and people who want to stop smoking or raiding the cookie jar - the world over.

Self hypnosis or autosuggestion is something we do all the time, we just may not realise it. Our mind is very powerful. Try the following exercise to see how powerful your mind is. (You may want to read it through and then close your eyes.)

The Juicy Orange

Imagine you have an orange in your hand. Think about how round and firm it is, and how juicy it is inside. It has been freshly picked, and has a lovely deep orange colour.

Now hold out your hand and spend time imagining how it feels in your hand. Take the orange and place it down on a cutting board.

Take an imagined knife and slice that orange in half, and then half again

Pick up one of the segments. Feel the cool juices from the orange drip down your fingers as you lift the piece to your mouth. Open your mouth and put the orange inside, biting down on the flesh and letting the juice run down your tongue.

Think about how it tastes - the sweetness of the citrus juice in your mouth.

What This Exercise Does

The majority of people who do this exercise experience something quite extraordinary. Their taste buds are stimulated, and their mouth produces saliva to help the body digest the orange - even though the actual process is imagined.

Why does this happen? Because the thoughts we hold in our mind have the power to make physiological changes to our body. Our thoughts can change the way we work, think and behave. If a simple exercise like imagining eating an orange can prepare your mouth for actually eating it, imagine how effective changing other behaviours can be, by repeating a simple idea or creating a powerful image.

Even if you have never consciously explored self hypnosis before, you may have at some time, tried to talk yourself into something. Repeating an idea or belief over and over again can help internalize the idea until it becomes a natural part of you. Many of us do this without calling it self hypnosis.

Feeling a little down at times? Perhaps your self talk has some of the following phrases - “I’m no good” or “I can’t do this”

There is a children’s story about The Little Engine That Could. It is about a little train who is able to pull a weight that is heavier than it is built to pull simply through its belief in itself. As it pulls the load behind it, the Little Engine cries “I think I can. I think I can.” and the Little Engine can.

Self hypnosis helps those things that you struggle against become more straightforward and attainable. It’s not about bending the laws of physics, allowing you to fly or have superpowers - it is all about tapping into the tremendous power of your mind and utilising it to its fullest capacity.

Is Hypnosis a Mainstream Concept?

If you are considering hypnosis but worry that it may be taking you on the long slow road to hippy shirts or skirts and backpacking through India in search of your Guru you can relax.

Many high performance athletes and sports people use self hypnosis to break through personal barriers and keep themselves focused on improving their performance. It has been found to help athletes, who have been injured, to heal faster and become stronger through using self hypnosis techniques.

Many of these athletes use mantras or short simple phrases during their training sessions to push them through their perceived barriers, and keep them focused on their goals.

Business owners and entrepreneurs use hypnosis to stay focused in work and as a starting point to increased creativity, through brainstorming. With many of us allowing our fears to curtail the “what could be” in our lives, finding a way to break through those limitations and replacing those fears with positive images and positive self talk can help greatly in business.

Addictive behaviour can also be helped with self hypnosis techniques. Smokers, dieters, and those wanting to change any un-resourceful behaviour/habit can find that these tools will reprogram those negative patterns. If you have a major addiction however, it is a good idea to seek medical help, using hypnosis, only as part of the whole method.

Chronic illness can also be helped with hypnosis. To give an idea of the power of thought, a study of patients with Cystic Fibrosis, an incurable genetic condition, found that hypnotherapy is able to improve their health, by helping them to breathe easier (this condition fills the lungs with fluid), thereby reducing anxiety and improving the ability to clear the lungs.

Cancer patients have long used self hypnosis as part of their fight against the illness. Being able to visualize their body healing itself and being victorious has not only been shown to be effective in helping the healing process, it has also considerably reduced the amount of anxiety attached to the illness. Hypnosis can help people with chronic illness take charge of their body - when often the illness and the related treatments make them feel as though they have to let go of their own decision making and are no longer in control. That alone makes self hypnosis a worthwhile tool.

Mental health conditions such as panic attacks, depression and self harm can also be helped with hypnotherapy. In severe mental health cases hypnosis should only be used in conjunction with professional advice and treatment. However learning to use simple and effective breathing and affirmation techniques can help pre-empt episodes, or reconfigure thought patterns so that any negative behaviour is reduced.

Many doctors, health professionals, trainers and advisors recommend hypnosis as an excellent tool. Using it in your own life is an excellent way to achieve your personal goals.

With so many people finding it an excellent tool to solve their own issues, you can be assured that you are using something that really does work and is considered extremely useful.

How Does Hypnosis Work?

We have two parts of our mind: the conscious and the unconscious. Our conscious mind is the part of our mind we need to analyze and rationalize.

It is able to hold only, seven pieces of information, plus or minus two, at any given time and it has a working or short term memory, perfect for remembering that telephone number someone gives you just before you dial it, or the fact you got up from the sofa to make a cup of tea when you get to the kitchen. It's the part of our mind that is talking to us all day long, sometimes with an ongoing chatter. It helps us solve problems and is able to make sense of any behaviour we see or experience.

Our unconscious mind, however, is busy 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. It is in charge of all the autonomic parts of our body. These are the parts that we need to stay alive, such as a regular heart rate, stable blood pressure and our breathing. It also holds our creative parts, our emotions, our imagination and all our feelings and emotions. Our permanent memories are also stored in our unconscious mind. All the things you believe and live by come from what is stored there. When you respond to something with any emotion or a smell or an action evokes a memory, that response comes from your unconscious mind.

Your unconscious self can sometimes get a little drowned out with all the chattering your conscious mind does during the day.

Self hypnosis helps quieten the conscious internal chatter and allows positive suggestions to be made to your unconscious mind.

In many ways your unconscious mind is similar to a computer.

Self hypnosis reprograms your unconscious and then reboots, saving all the new information for it to use when you awaken from your relaxed state. Because many of our actions stem from our emotions and feelings, changing these will change the way we act and react in different situations.

If you think you've never been hypnotized, think again. You enter a hypnotic state at least twice a day - as you go to sleep and again as you awaken. Studies have shown one of the best ways to learn a skill is to sleep on it. It allows the unconscious to save all the new positive material in your "memory banks" where it will remain, ready to be used again.

An hypnotic state can occur naturally, when you are relaxed. If you've ever been driving and suddenly realized you are almost at your destination but are a little unsure of how you got there, then you've been accessing your unconscious state.

Book lovers may know the feeling of becoming so immersed in a good book they don't hear someone talking to them. That's them moving into a state of hypnosis.

Sometimes stress or our environment can prevent us from stilling ourselves enough to teach our unconscious mind positive behaviours.

Negative self talk, can prevent us from losing weight, stopping smoking or feeling confident when attending a business meeting.

Using self hypnosis tools can provide our unconscious mind with new positive thoughts/self talk that replace or override negativity.

As these become our dominant thoughts, they affect our actions and behaviour and positive changes begin to occur in our lives. The best part is, as it is driven from our unconscious mind, we don't have to utilise willpower or reason to get there - we just let our unconscious mind lead us instead.

Who Shouldn't use Self-Hypnosis?

Self hypnosis can be used to help, across a broad range of conditions. We have already talked briefly about its many uses so - how can that apply to you?

Hypnosis isn't for everyone. If you feel very nervous about trying it or are convinced it's all a waste of time, it's not going to be very effective. Some people may find it difficult to become relaxed enough to reach a point where they are taken into a deep quiet state

If this is you, then before you consider starting self hypnosis, practice having moments of peace and quiet. Perhaps go on a daily walk, without your mp3 player, cell phone or a friend and enjoy the thoughts in your head, or spend five to ten minutes a day sitting quietly, preferably in nature. If this proves difficult, relaxing for a self hypnosis session may prove difficult also.

Once that quiet space feels a little easier to access you can progress to a positive self hypnosis session. For new ideas to become deeply embedded in your unconscious mind, the deeper your level of relaxation is the better.

If you have a full and chaotic life, consider how much available time you have. Regular sessions are better than one or two every now and again.

If that all sounds a little off putting it doesn't need to be. You'll know when you are ready. If you start and it feels somewhat stressful, take a short break, then try again.

However, there is one important consideration when resolving difficulties.

Our minds and our bodies like everything to stay the same.

The old saying “creatures of habit” is one that perfectly describes all of us.

We will do almost anything to stay the same even if the “same” isn’t what is best for us. This is one of the reasons so many diets fail. When you make big changes all at once your conscious mind may protest and may rationalize that you are making changes too quickly and won’t be able to cope.

Should you start a course of self hypnosis and find you encounter a few “speed bumps” - don’t worry, it is only your body and mind readjusting to the new information.

One of the benefits of self hypnosis is that it is something that can be practiced whatever your current physical state.

Whereas yoga and tai chi can also help you move into a relaxed state, there may be times in your life where that type of movement is neither practical nor possible.

The majority of self hypnosis practitioners find that the journey to new positive behaviours is pleasantly gentle, encouraging and worthwhile.

If you feel self hypnosis is for you, take action now and see how it suits your needs, lifestyle and goals.

What is Self-Hypnosis Suitable For?

Now that we've looked at people who may find hypnosis difficult, let's take a look at the areas in which self hypnosis techniques are used. These are all areas that have been found to benefit from self hypnosis techniques and cover a broad range of applications from business, to health and fitness, to personal relationships

Stopping Smoking

Self hypnosis can be extremely effective in stopping smoking. It can teach you to find the taste of smoking unpleasurable and reminds your conscious mind to nourish your body with those things which are only beneficial. It can also diminish the cravings associated with nicotine withdrawal and help you become smoke free forever.

Sleeping Better

If you find it difficult to sleep - it may be that you need to learn how to move from the conscious to the unconscious, using your unconscious mind - Confused?

In essence you may need to learn some effective relaxation techniques to realign your sleep patterns.

With the amount of stress many of us often encounter, it is easy to become caught up in patterns of regular wakefulness and find it harder to settle at bedtime.

Self hypnosis is ideal for sleep pattern disruptions as the ideal time to apply self hypnosis is just before bed.

By applying these techniques you will be completely relaxed and ready for a good night's sleep.

Developing Your Career

Is there something preventing you from being where you want to be in your career?

While many people may blame external circumstances, we can all think of at least one person who has risen beyond circumstance and has overcome all obstacles. You could be that person with a little help from self hypnosis. Changing the way you think, changes the way you act and determines your degree of success.

Losing Weight

While it used to be felt that willpower was all that was needed to lose weight, scientific and nutritional research has discovered that will power alone is not enough. Our bodies will fight any attempt by the conscious mind to control our digestion and energy levels as those are the domain of the unconscious mind.

Add in comfort/emotional eating issues, or eating when stress levels are high due to high levels of cortisone and it begins to become clear that losing weight is far more complex than just ensuring you don't buy a pie or three for dinner.

Self hypnosis can help to change your relationship with food. It can help break the cycle of negative eating habits, and reduce food cravings and addictions

Self Confidence

If you're worried about how people see you, or feel your sense of self worth has been eroded over the years, then your self confidence may benefit from a bit of care and attention. Self hypnosis helps you to accentuate the positive parts of yourself and build on them. It helps to still the fear that can arise in

places where you feel less than confident such as, parties where you don't know many people, on dates or during a job interview

A lack of self confidence can inhibit your ability to function as a successful and happy person.

Establishing a sound level of confidence through self hypnosis can impact greatly in many areas of your life.

Many people have found this to be an ongoing process until others start to treat them differently. Once others start to react positively to their change in confidence, that change becomes easier and the positive feedback received builds on the foundation that has already been set in place - it becomes easier and easier until the perceived issue no longer exists.

Improving Your Memory

Your long term memory is controlled by your unconscious self. Helping your mind make connections between pieces of information and filing it in the correct place can greatly enhance your memory skills. There are several popular self hypnosis tools that can help you improve your ability to file old and new information so that it's a lot easier to retrieve.

Studies show that people in the early stages of Alzheimer's, who continue to stimulate their brain, can sometimes reduce the effects of the disease. Self hypnosis can, still the mind enough to learn new skills.

Overcoming Shyness

If you have difficulty in unfamiliar social situations or find that you are tongue tied when you see that gorgeous person in the Accounts Dept., then self hypnosis can help you overcome your shyness. Fear of rejection, or not being accepted as you are, often results in shyness.

Some people are “labelled” as shy from an early age, and may need to relinquish learned perceptions by embracing a new and more outgoing self.

Getting Pregnant

For anyone who has experienced infertility, the expectation of a positive result can be heartbreaking when once again the test shows negative.

Learning to visualize success in pregnancy has been found to help couples in their journey towards conception. Many fertility practitioners recommend relaxation as an aid towards conception. Becoming agitated about getting pregnant can cause stress to your body. It can be helpful to see the entire pregnancy as a success, visualizing the foetus developing into a relaxed, happy and healthy baby.

Childbirth

Pain seems to be an expected outcome of childbirth but does it have to be?

Many women have found self hypnosis techniques, learned before going into labour, can help them find that same relaxed state during the birth process. The more relaxed the expectant mother is, the easier the birth tends to be, and the baby can more easily move down the birth canal. Many experienced midwives recommend using self hypnosis as an alternative to any pain medication.

It is a well known fact that the main benefit of using hypnosis in labour is to help the woman focus on their breath.

As Mum takes deep breaths in and out, she will find it easier to relax as each contraction becomes stronger.

Being able to visualize each contraction as a wave to ride helps her to take charge and feel more empowered.

Improving Relationships

If you have difficulty with intimacy in personal relationships such as, connecting with a partner or finding it hard not to get angry with loved ones, self hypnosis can help you to change your behaviour. It is often astonishing to discover many of the issues we have with others aren't actually about how they act, it is entirely the result of our own perceptions or internal state.

If you find it difficult to form good boundaries, or establish healthy relationships with your loved ones, then self hypnosis will help you establish these boundaries and alter the way you relate to them.

This can also include business relationships. If you find you are falling into recurring relationship patterns such as, being bullied, arguing, passive aggressive behaviour and anxiety, in any area of your life, then it's worthwhile to take a look at your own patterns of behaviour and alter them.

Finding love may be easier after self hypnosis. There may be an amount of fear attached to forming a new relationship due to a concern of being rejected or not seeing yourself as valuable. Self hypnosis can help you internalize a positive self image and belief to change that.

Improving Mood

If you have low mood (low grade depression), then self hypnosis techniques alone may be enough to elevate your mood and help you cope with the stresses affecting it.

If you have a diagnosed condition and are taking medication, using self hypnosis can help you change some of the learned behaviours that may be contributing to your condition. While it is not advisable to stop prescribed medication, self hypnosis

techniques can help you reduce some of the long term effects of your condition. Many people have found they are able to reduce their levels of medication through the use of these techniques.

Others, who may have chronic mental illness have found that alongside long term prescription drug treatment, self hypnosis gives them the opportunity to prevent further downturns in mood and avoid hospitalization

Sports Performance

This subject has been mentioned elsewhere in this report. Teaching your mind to experience success is a huge part of this, as is injury prevention methods and working past the pain barrier.

People have been known to adopt mantras from their hypnosis sessions to use while running marathons, playing high level games, to refocus after exhaustion sets in or during times of high pressure (such as needing to score that all important penalty to win the Premiership.)

It can also help sports people and athletes, who have sustained an injury, to move in such a way so as not to make the injury worse, and so speed up the healing process.

If a jockey has been injured in a bad fall, or a motocross rider in an accident, self hypnosis techniques can help overcome any residual fear about getting back on the horse or bike.

Increasing Creativity

If you want to develop a more creative outlook, then self hypnosis can help you. With many jobs now including a creative component, or people needing creativity in their every day life, increasing your creativity can have far reaching results. Many artists and creators use meditation, self hypnosis and quiet reflective times to brainstorm. Hypnosis can help you reach deeper levels faster.

Will it Work Right-Away?

Self hypnosis is also known as autosuggestion or autogenic training. As with any training program, it can take a little time to get your new healthy thinking fitness patterns ready to work by themselves.

If you've ever taken up a hobby such as running, you'll be only too aware of the feeling you get early in the morning while you are still establishing new habits. The mental arguments you can have while you try to decide if you should get up for that run in the rain on a cold and dark morning can take a while to override, even if you can feel your fitness levels increase at a good rate due to the daily runs.

Self hypnosis patterns are no different. You may see small changes right away, but long term change comes from the unconscious mind allowing the new behaviours become your "second nature"

When going into a relaxed state for hypnosis, you are allowing your unconscious mind to accept the positive suggestions being heard. These repetitive positive affirmations help your mind to replace negative beliefs with positive ones.

Hypnosis in many ways is another form of meditation, like praying, power naps, and those deep and meaningful talks you give yourself in the mirror about how "I can do this thing!" One type of autosuggestion or self hypnosis many people use every year is the New Years Resolutions we try to adhere to. If we repeat it to ourselves, plot a course of action and work towards it, we are enacting our autosuggestion.

Once we present our mind with the positive thoughts we need to take on board, and allow these thoughts to become internalized, these thoughts can become part of our belief system. Once they

are part of our belief system and then affect our conscious behaviours, we start to make progress towards our most desired goals.

While sometimes it is an unintentional process (such as shying away from a spider as your subconscious believes them to be scary) we can consciously change our beliefs.

When and How Often?

Most practitioners and self hypnosis providers suggest twenty minutes a day is enough to kick start new thought patterns and their related behaviours. While you can use any quiet spot to do this, the best time to use it is prior to sleep or, if you are lucky enough to have them, before an afternoon nap. Sleep allows your mind to process and feed off the thoughts. Repeating some of the key ideas on awakening will help you start the day with your thoughts and focus on positive rather than negative ideas.

Many people who use self hypnosis on a regular basis find that increasing the hours spent per week doesn't speed up the changes in thinking. This is one of those activities that you really only need to do once or twice a day.

Perhaps the key is to commit to it for a minimum time period such as four times a week for three weeks. While it's best to practice hypnosis every day, forgetting or feeling guilty if you miss it may defeat the end purpose of adding to your relaxation. You want this to be a positive experience that your mind and body starts to look forward to.

With continuous practice, self hypnosis can and will help you conquer the mountains standing between you and your goals. All you need to do is **take action**.



About Larry Hudson

Larry Hudson is the founder of Larry Hudson – Life Choices and Life Choices Training Ltd. Based in Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

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