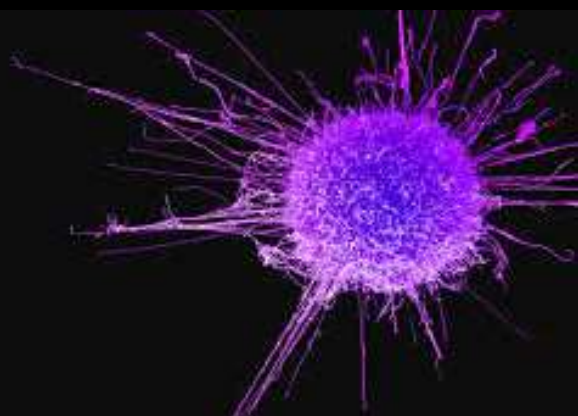


# hypnosis for pain management



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# Introduction

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**Hit your thumb with a hammer and you'll know about it immediately because you feel the pain in your brain, not in your thumb. If you can focus your attention on something else that will reduce the sensation of pain immediately. Taking the Lord's name in vain works for me...**

Pain is nature's way of telling us there's something wrong. It's also the worst thing you can sense. The human body is crammed with pain receptors and any damage to the body is urgent news for the brain. The brain needs to know about damage immediately so that it can take action quickly — the affected pain receptors let in a chemical released at the site of the injury. This sends a signal along the nerve to your brain but different types of pain send signals at different speeds.

Sharp pains move at 29.9 metres per second — this is so we can whip our hand away from the burning hotplate quickly to minimise damage. Dull aches on the other hand move at a more leisurely 1.98 metres per second. This is very similar to the way sound waves travel — high pitched sounds have a much higher frequency than low pitched ones.

It's difficult to remember exactly what pain feels like. This is because the brain wants us to notice pain so we can take appropriate action and do something about the cause quickly.

Previously unknown chemicals called Enkephalins, discovered by John Hughes and Hans Kosterlitz at Aberdeen University, can block pain signals. These enkephalins may explain why pain is less noticeable if the mind is distracted or concentrated elsewhere. A good example is soldiers in battle are injured but seldom feel any pain at the time an injury is received — they are concentrating so much on getting the job done and on their own survival, their brain simply doesn't notice the pain, or chooses to ignore it until later.

Another example is a child tripping and scraping its knee. Instead of drawing the child's attention to the pain by dabbing the graze with a handkerchief, the clever mother immediately distracts the child's attention by pointing out something that will capture the child's attention, for instance a bird, an aeroplane or a toy in a shop window. By rubbing the affected parts of the body, applying ice, or swearing, etc., sends different signals that swamp the pain signals.

As hypnotherapists, we must always be circumspect when dealing with pain relief. Pain may be a symptom of a deeper underlying problem. You must investigate thoroughly and even then, the greatest of care must be exercised. It's one thing to deal with a series of headaches but another to discover, too late, that the real cause was a brain tumour. It's always a good idea to ask the client if they have sought advice from their doctor.

The most common pains occur in the back, shoulders and neck, as well as the lower back and lumbar region. These and similar conditions can be easy to deal with — as early as 1892 the British Medical Association recognised that hypnosis was an effective therapeutic agent in the relief of pain. Dealing with pain is simply a case of mind over matter!

Researchers led by Ulrike Bingel at the University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf in Germany have identified an area of the brain that processes both pain and working memory. This is another example of groups of neurones having a dual function, but to complicate matters, this particular area seems to give preference to pain over memory.

Using fMRI scans, the researchers found that when pain was applied to volunteers hands, activity in the brain areas involved in processing pain increased, whilst at the same time,

activity in areas assigned to carrying out cognitive tasks decreased. Bingel believes that the work may have implications for pain management and given that as hypnotists, we already know all about distraction and refocusing to reduce or eliminate pain, he is almost certainly right. Pain really does interfere with effective mental functioning, which is why it's hard to concentrate on anything (for example, name, rank, serial number) when you're being subjected to severe pain by an overbearing German. Nonetheless, the experiments sound fun.

Pain can be blocked out by telling yourself it doesn't exist. We can even train our brains to switch pain on and off. If we allow our imagination to run wild, the experience of pain is often increased, yet we can also harness our imagination to manage or numb the pain or our perception of the pain. The technique works best by first getting the client to give the pain a number from one to ten and then counting down a level every time you describe the reduction of the shape, size and colour of the pain as it decreases.

Everyone notices a reduction to some degree and most people can reduce it down to one or two after less than five minutes.

It also utilises visualisation techniques such as imagining that the pain has form — a sharp jagged shape in the case of a sharp pain or rounded shape in the case of a dull ache. We can also give the pain a size, which may correspond to the size of the affected area, and a colour. Most people choose an angry red or bright orange but the exact colour doesn't matter. By using hypnotic suggestions it is possible to reduce the size of the pain, the general shape (by making the edges fuzzy and less well defined) and by 'phasing' the colour from say, the angry red to a pale blue.

Other techniques include engaging the creative imagination to visualise snowflakes falling on the affected part or even the whole body or imagining the pain ebbing away like a receding tide. Some people find it easier to imagine the pain being drained out of a small hole in the affected body part.

Scientists have been able to confirm the effectiveness of these methods by monitoring the level of activity in the rostral anterior cingulate cortex. The Journal of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in the USA reported that volunteers who tried these visualisation techniques managed an average of a 64% reduction in chronic pain – and that's without hypnosis! Once hypnosis enters the equation, the effect is even more dramatic. The idea here is the subject is taught to retrain their own brains to manage pain.

It happens in two stages... first, the subject is taught the relaxation exercises that enable them achieve self-hypnosis followed by the appropriate suggestions to give themselves when they have a quiet moment or when the pain becomes noticeable again.

# Hypnosis — the perfect alternative to pain

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Studies show that more than 75% of people with arthritis and related diseases experience significant pain relief using hypnosis. Researchers at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York analysed 18 studies and found moderate to large pain-relieving effects from hypnosis, thus supporting its use for pain management.

## Learning to Relax With Hypnosis

Hypnosis isn't just about convincing clients they don't feel pain — it's about helping them manage the fear and anxiety they feel about pain. Hypnosis relaxes them, and redirects their attention from the sensation of pain.

In a hypnosis session, which usually lasts 10-20 minutes, clients will start by focusing on breathing and relaxation. The client will then be asked to imagine a pleasant place and describe it in detail, refocusing their attention from the things that trigger negative feelings and emotions to something that will activate positive emotions, such as lying on the beach. There, they will imagine the warmth of the sun, the cool breeze and the sand at their feet.

There, they will be less focused on their pain. The process teaches them how to prepare to react to pain in the future. Suggestions might include instructions such as: *You will feel this same sensation of pain, but you ll be much less distressed about it, much calmer, much more at ease, not worried about it.*"

**Hypnosis is a natural state of mental and physical relaxation** where a person becomes more open to positive suggestions for change. In this highly suggestible state, it's also possible to alter perceptions of pain, create natural anaesthesia, and manage chronic pain symptoms.

Pain is the body's way of telling you something may be wrong, so it's important to consult a medical doctor when *undiagnosed* pain symptoms arise.

**Suggestibility is the natural capacity to respond to benign ideas** from a therapist or ourselves. Although suggestibility tests can indicate how well a person will respond to the hypnotic process, they are not the final word. Even those who 'fail' suggestibility tests will still benefit from hypnosis.

**The mind and body influence each other** — thoughts, ideas, and emotions are not only experienced mentally but also have physical effects. For example, simply thinking of a favourite food can cause your mouth to start watering. Sensations in the body can also affect one's mood and emotional state. A headache can make someone feel irritable or make it difficult — even impossible — to enjoy activities that are normally pleasant.

**A variety of hypnotic phenomena can be created and observed.** While in hypnosis, a person can experience dissociation, time distortion, and even catalepsy, as well as positive and negative hallucinations (seeing things that are there or not there).

**These phenomena are not induced for their own sake, but in order to facilitate therapeutic progress by calling attention to the mind's ability to create tangible changes in the body.**

**Hypnosis for pain management is not a one-off treatment, but an ongoing process.**

Hypnosis typically helps relieve pain in the first session, but for the long term, another 3 or 4 short sessions — of around 10 to 20 minutes — are the norm. However, with the help of modern technology, clients can be provided with a series of short recordings. These are easy to make and will be useful for ‘topping up’ clients, so long as at least part of the recording is client specific. The goal is to teach clients the technique so they can use it on their own when pain strikes.

Some people benefit faster but others not at all. Some patients prefer to come up with their own script and not rely on a recording or the therapist’s voice to activate the process.

Learning hypnosis takes practice, and some people learn it more easily than others. Clients should practice when they feel little or no pain because it can be harder when they’re in a lot of pain.

### **Is Hypnosis right for the client?**

Some people respond to hypnosis better than others, but there’s no harm in trying it with everyone. Hypnosis has no side effects and if it doesn’t work, the client can stop at any time. Most people report significant reduction in pain. Recordings provide a simple tool that can be used any time.

During hypnosis, clients will focus on relaxation and concentrate on visualising the things they talked about. Everyone has an imagination and the imagination can be a powerful tool.

Clients become more open to specific suggestions and goals, such as lowering pain and after the session, we will go over the things that will help you reach those goals.

Research shows that hypnosis can help with both sudden (acute) and long-term (chronic) pain from cancer, burns, and rheumatoid arthritis. Hypnosis will also ease anxiety.

### **Background**

The empirical support for hypnosis for chronic pain management has flourished over the past two decades. Clinical trials show that hypnosis is effective for reducing chronic pain, although outcomes vary with the individual.

The findings from these clinical trials also show that hypnotic treatments have a number of positive effects beyond pain control. Neurophysiological studies reveal that hypnotic analgesia has clear effects on brain function that — as a function of the specific hypnotic suggestions made — provide evidence for the specific effects of hypnosis. The research results have important implications for how clinicians can help clients experience the maximum benefit from hypnosis.

It’s not unknown for frustrated patients to seek costly treatments from multiple health care professionals without enjoying significant relief. Although a number of psychological approaches to the treatment of chronic pain have demonstrated success over the last few decades, there is a need for additional and robust treatment options for chronic pain.

There is growing awareness of the limitations of currently available pain treatments. Training patients in self-hypnosis is an attractive alternative. There are increasing concerns about over-reliance on medicines which can have side effects. There are also concerns long-term efficacy.

There is a need for effective pain treatments that have minimal side effects, and there is as yet, no pain treatment option with fewer adverse effects than hypnosis — Jensen et al., 2006.

Hypnosis has been used to treat every type of pain condition imaginable over centuries and across cultures — Pintar & Lynn, 2008.

What is new about hypnotic analgesia is the compelling empirical evidence that has emerged in the last two decades regarding its efficacy and mechanistic underpinnings.

Much research into hypnotic analgesia focused on acute pain induced in laboratory settings or pain associated with medical procedures. This work continues, and there have also been a number of recent innovative applications of hypnosis to treat acute pain.

Other recent advances in understanding have come from imaging studies examining the brain functions associated with hypnosis and hypnotic analgesia — Barabasz & Barabasz, 2008; Oakley, 2008; Oakley & Halligan, 2010; D. Spiegel, Bierre, & Rootenberg, 1989.

There has also been recent and dramatic increases in research on the efficacy of hypnosis for chronic pain conditions — Montgomery, DuHamel, & Redd, 2000; Stoelb, Molton, Jensen, & Patterson, 2009; Tomé-Pires & Miró, 2012.

Clinical studies on acute and chronic pain have demonstrated that hypnosis is a more effective treatment than placebo. Hypnosis also has measurable effects on activity in brain areas known to be involved in processing pain.

Recent clinical trials provide significant evidence for the clinical application of hypnosis for the management of chronic pain. There is a high degree of variability in response to hypnotic analgesia, and the benefits of hypnosis treatment go beyond simple pain relief.

Hypnosis for pain relief is no longer a myth. Pain, after all, is an experience produced by several parts of the central nervous system and not simply the result of tissue damage.

Medicine has long understood that hypnosis can alleviate pain, but there is still speculation as to why it works. Hypnosis alters pain perception by changing activity in the brain areas associated with pain processing. Two areas of the brain appear to be involved in processing pain — the anterior cingulate cortex, and the somatosensory cortices.

One way to prove this is by doing it in reverse — inducing pain with hypnotic suggestion. Researchers compared brain scans of participants who were subjected to mild pain via a heating pad on their hand, hypnotically suggested pain, or were just asked to imagine pain while not under hypnosis. Not only did the participants report experiencing pain when it was suggested under hypnosis, the scans showed their brains lit up in a similar way to those with real pain. The scientists didn't see such patterns when they asked participants to simply imagine pain. Some people are more susceptible to hypnosis than others.

An individual's *hypnotisability* is influenced by biological, psychological and socio-environmental factors, and can vary from day to day and situation to situation.

Around 80% of the general population being in the medium-to-high hypnotic suggestibility range, hypnosis is potentially very useful.

As well as reducing pain, hypnosis can reduce the amount of painkiller medications and mental distress associated with surgery and medical procedures.

Long-term pain management is another important application of hypnosis.

**There is no evidence of ill effects in individuals treated with hypnosis, although the level of professionalism of the hypnotists was presumed to be high in these studies.**

Hypnosis depends less on whether the treatment and techniques are inherently meaningful and more on the client's ability to properly employ them. Pain relief won't occur by simply performing hypnosis. Similarly, we wouldn't expect patients to be up and about immediately after surgery. It's important to consider the type of pain and client's profiles.

**Response to hypnosis is variable and pain is a complex phenomenon**, and shouldn't be approached with a single-mode solution. Ideally, hypnosis is better used alongside, or as part of, a more complete treatment programme for meaningful change to happen. In other words, the client should not dismiss their usual medical treatment. Hypnosis is best effective when used alongside the usual treatment, not as a substitute.

### **Hypnosis is like Meditation**

Anyone can do it — anytime, anywhere and studies suggest that making meditation a habit can help people manage their pain and self-esteem, as well as their stress, anxiety and even depression.

It all comes down to spending a few minutes a day focusing your attention on one thing, such as breathing or a repeated mantra (word or phrase) that inspires or comforts. As the client does this, other thoughts are bound to creep in, but that's OK. They simply have to direct their attention back to the thing they chose to focus on.

**Progressive muscle relaxation** involves tensing each muscle group, holding the tension briefly, and then letting it go. It's easy to do this in a systematic way, starting with the muscles in the toes and working parts of the body in order, moving upon the body and releasing tension. However, if the client suffers from cardiovascular disease maybe you should skip progressive muscle relaxation. Tensing your abdominal muscles can build up pressure in the chest cavity, slow your pulse, and hamper the flow of blood to the heart.

**Autogenic training** uses visual imagery and body awareness to help relaxation. The client imagines being in a peaceful place and focuses on different physical sensations, such as heaviness of the limbs or a calm heartbeat. Clients can practice this on their own, creating their own images.

**Breathing** is something you do every second of every day, but we sometimes forget that. Practicing tuning into your breathing is a form of meditation anyway. Clients breathe in slowly while counting to 5, hold their breath for 5, then exhale for 5 counts, repeating the process while progressively relaxing all the muscles. These techniques can be taught in groups and then practiced at home.

**Physical pain is often accompanied by unpleasant emotions such as fear and anxiety.** These emotions can exacerbate pain symptoms and create a feedback loop of discomfort. One of the purposes of hypnosis is to help the person suffering from pain to manage the fear and anxiety related to that pain.

By relaxing physically and mentally, it becomes easier to redirect the client's attention away from the sensations of pain. In this relaxed state, indirect suggestions are then offered to help the person react differently to the pain in the future.

A typical suggestion may be something like *Even when you feel this same sensation of pain, you will be much less distressed about it. You will feel calmer, much more at ease, and not worried about it at all.* By layering multiple suggestions such as this one while in the hypnotic state, the subconscious mind becomes conditioned to remember the instructions whenever the person's attention becomes focused on the sensation of pain.

### **Who Can Benefit From Hypnosis for Pain Relief?**

Pain can seriously affect a person's quality of life. Therefore, it is important to explore all options available when attempting to manage it. Mainstream medicine often relies heavily on medication to treat pain symptoms, but this can lead to unexpected and unwanted consequences such as addiction, overdose, and even death. Hypnosis is an alternative treatment to pain that does not rely on potentially addictive drugs.

### **People who could benefit from hypnosis for pain management include:**

- Chronic pain patients
- Those prone to addiction
- Cancer patients
- Migraine sufferers
- People with arthritis or fibromyalgia

In addition, hypnosis is sometimes used as an alternative to chemical anaesthetic in dental procedures, minor surgeries, and childbirth. It is also used to help people reduce and manage pain symptoms after major surgeries.

### **Sensitivity to Hypnotherapy Can Vary**

Hypnotherapy effects can vary from person to person. It is important to understand that it may not work for some while working very well for others. There is still a lot to learn about the practice and who may be more sensitive to its positive effects. It is important to go into a session as open minded and emotionally grounded as possible.

### **How Does Hypnosis for Pain Relief Work?**

Depending on the issue, a typical course of hypnosis for pain management will include two or more hypnosis sessions with a trained therapist over the course of a few weeks. In addition to treating the issue with the therapist, these sessions will include instruction on self-hypnosis techniques that the person will be able to use to manage their pain symptoms on their own.

During hypnosis sessions, the hypnotist will most likely begin with a guided progressive relaxation exercise. This begins with focusing awareness on the breathing, noticing how the breath is deepening feelings of relaxation as it begins to slow.

### **Some techniques a hypnotherapist may employ include:**

#### **Imagining a Pain Dial**

In this technique, the person will be instructed to control the intensity of the pain by turning an imaginary dial or knob. First, the pain is increased. This helps the person recognise that they have some agency over how pain is experienced. It then follows logically that if the pain can be increased, then it can also be decreased.

## Glove Anaesthesia

While in the trance state, the hypnotist suggests a feeling of tingling numbness in the hand or another part of the body. This can provide adequate anaesthesia for dental procedures and minor surgeries. Oftentimes, it is possible to suggest that the person imagine moving the painful sensation to different parts of the body. As in the pain dial technique, this reinforces the idea of agency.

## Dissociation

Dissociation is achieved using guided imagery and visualisation. While in trance the person will be asked to imagine themselves in a calm, peaceful, and safe place. This process helps the person dissociate from the painful sensations and focus on more pleasant feelings.

## Benefits of Hypnosis for Pain Management

There are many reasons to explore hypnosis as an alternative to other pain management strategies. Compared to other options it is all natural, effective, and safe. However, hypnosis is not for everyone.

Some of the pros of hypnosis for pain are:

- **It's drug free:** One of the main benefits of hypnosis for pain is that there is no need for expensive and potentially addictive drugs.
- **Self-hypnosis:** Most hypnotherapists will teach several techniques for inducing self-hypnosis. This is especially effective as it empowers the person to manage pain when other methods may not be available.
- **It's safe:** A 2016 review of 5 major meta-analyses concluded that hypnotherapy is a safe and effective treatment for a variety of presenting issues.
- **It's quick:** Because hypnotherapy is a solution-based treatment, the course of therapy is usually short. Many people successfully learn how to manage pain symptoms after one or two treatments.

## Drawbacks & Limitations of Hypnosis for Pain Relief

- **Unrealistic expectations:** Some people may be under the impression that hypnosis can completely remove pain symptoms. Although it is possible that hypnosis can aid in speeding up the healing process, it should be acknowledged that hypnosis is not a magic cure.
- **Out of pocket costs:** Many insurance companies do not regularly cover hypnosis. Check with your insurance provider before committing to treatment.
- **It may not work:** Try as they might, some people may just not respond to hypnosis. In this case, consult with your doctor to learn about other options.

## Effectiveness of Hypnosis for Pain Relief

Applications of hypnosis for pain management and anesthesia have been well-documented since the mid 1800's. By 1846, James Esdaile, a Scottish surgeon stationed in India, documented nearly 300 major surgeries where he used hypnosis for anesthesia.<sup>2</sup> He also reported that these pain-free surgeries dramatically reduced death rates, especially from postoperative shock.

In more recent times, hypnosis for pain management has been studied extensively. Here are some results of recent studies:

- A 2016 study of women with multiple sclerosis, found that the participants who used self-hypnosis reported dramatically lower pain scale numbers.
- An article for the Annals of Palliative Medicine published in 2019 details the effectiveness of hypnosis for a wide range of pain issues including acute back pain, chronic pain, and pain from surgery.
- A 2002 meta-analysis of published controlled studies looked at hypnosis with surgical patients to determine whether hypnosis has a significant beneficial impact. The results revealed a significant effect size, indicating that surgical patients in hypnosis treatment groups had better outcomes than 89% of patients in control groups.
- In 2007, a randomly selected group of 200 breast surgery patients were administered hypnosis prior to their operations. Participants reported less pain, nausea, fatigue, discomfort, and emotional upset than the control group at discharge.
- A 2019 study of people with hemophilia suffering from joint deterioration and chronic pain found that hypnosis reduced pain and improved quality of life for a majority of the participants.

### **Criticisms of Hypnosis for Pain**

Some of the biggest criticism of hypnosis as an intervention is the lack of research to back up some of the claims. While there is research in support of the use of hypnosis, there is still a lot to be learned. Some compare hypnosis to a placebo effect as long-term effects of hypnosis are under-studied. It's important to be aware that even if it works for pain control, hypnosis does not treat the underlying cause of the pain, which may require medical intervention as well.

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# Hypnosis and pain relief

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**There are millions who would give anything to have some respite from their agony.**

When we suffer pain, it fills our whole world. But there are non-invasive, non drug dependent psychological methods that can help clients. Pain is all too real and it is accurate to say that it is *felt* in the brain.

## **Hypnosis and pain relief**

Hypnosis has been used for centuries to control pain. From amputation to resetting broken limbs, hypnosis has helped people control it simply by using the power of their own minds. Hypnotherapists all over the world use the power of hypnosis to help reduce people's pain levels.

Pain is nature's way of alerting us that something is wrong and needs attention. In other words, we need to take heed of pain and listen to what it's trying to tell us. Pain is a signal that something needs our urgent attention. Pain is telling us to get to a doctor or a dentist! So rule 1 when dealing with pain is to make sure the client gets it checked out — before we wade in where angels fear to tread.

Having said that, hypnosis has proved to be highly effective in treating post-operative pain. Either way, both therapist and client must accept that hypnosis by itself will be of no value if the actual cause of the pain remains untreated.

What is the pain telling your client? This is an important question because how your client views their pain can affect the way they experience it. We need to know what the pain might be trying to tell your client - and also what it *means* to your client.

### **Is the pain acute or chronic?**

Acute — Does the client have an expectation that the pain will recede at some point, as in the case of a stubbed toe, which really hurts but you know the pain won't last...

Chronic — Does the client expect the pain to last indefinitely or worsen.

### **So the first thing to discuss with your client is their understanding of their pain.**

Is it temporary?

Does it cause fear or anger?

One patient's perception of the pain of healing after surgery may be very different from another patient's feelings. For example, was their injury the result of a road accident or an assault by a violent mugger. For someone whose pain is a sign of deteriorating health or even approaching death, the pain — and the emotional or psychological pain may be devastating.

Pain captures and narrows the focus of attention — just like the process of hypnosis. The pain of a raging toothache will get you focused internally no matter what.

### **Beginning to change the experience of pain**

The first step to reframing pain is to find out how the client describes it. Is the pain sharp, dull, burning, throbbing, tender, searing, nagging, pulsating, shooting, excruciating, violent... etc?

Once we find out how they frame it now, we can start to think about how to *reframe* it.

## **There are 2 kinds of pain relief:**

- Analgesia: the absence of pain
- Anaesthesia: the absence of any sensation.

### **Technique 1: Reframe the pain**

- A burning pain can be 'cooled'
- A pulsating pain can be slowed, and eventually stopped altogether.

When we use this kind of wordplay, we begin to establish rapport with the client by using the client's description to modify their experience of the pain.

- Examples would be to slow down a pulsating or throbbing pain, or cooling a searing pain.
- Another methodology would be to rate the degree of pain on a scale of 1 to 10, and reduce the number slowly by linking it to the clients breathing.
- Yet another method would be to give the pain a size, shape or a colour and gradually reduce the size or fade the colour.

### **Technique 2: Distraction**

Distraction is very effective for managing pain. Soldiers injured in the heat of battle often don't feel the pain of injury when they are focussed on winning a battle. Their attention is often so focussed elsewhere, they often do not realise they've been injured until after the fight is over.

If you hit your thumb with a hammer, a good trick is to bite the inside of your cheek. This has the effect of diluting the pain because you're literally sharing it between two parts of the body. If you stub your toe, you will feel more pain if you just stand still. But if you shout and curse and swear, the pain won't feel as bad.

It's possible to use this technique with clients by asking them to focus on a non-injured part of their body — or in the case of emotional pain, a happier part of their life. In both cases, we can encourage them (in hypnosis) to relive a time before the pain — both physical and emotional — was present.

Distraction can include the use of imagery, visualisation, and even expectation. I would however, if physical contact is involved be very careful to have a chaperone present. In the UK, there have been incidences of hypnotherapists engaging in inappropriate physical contact with clients which have resulted in imprisonment.

However... relaxation, imagination and visualisation can dilute pain as the brain deals with sensory impulses unconnected with the pain itself, patients escaping their pain by engaging other sensory inputs.

### **Technique 3: Disassociation**

With hypnosis, we can direct attention to other areas of the body, or to times and places when they were free from discomfort. The technique utilises clients' natural capacity to disassociate from one kind of attentional focus and switch to another.

We all disassociate when we dream during sleep. Physically, we are lying still tucked up in bed, while psychologically, we might be defending the universe against alien attack. We forget about the body lying peacefully in bed, instead concentrating on another apparent though imaginary. reality.

Hypnosis can stimulate the imagination while the suggestions we give during hypnosis can enhance the relief of pain. So... a good idea is to find out what the client's interests are and talk about those, thus opening the door to distraction and disassociation. If they're interested in music, then we can go to a concert; if they're interested in football, then we'll go to a football match; if they're interested in wildlife, the off to Africa we will go. There really is no limit to a client's imagination!

Psychologist Milton Erickson once helped a woman with cancer through the most awful pain by leaving her pain-racked body in one room while she experienced going into another room to watch TV. This hypnotic 'out of body' experience meant that she could take regular breaks from the pain she'd been experiencing.

#### **Technique 4: Hypnotic anaesthesia**

Numbness is often a natural phenomena in hypnosis, regardless of whether or not it's been suggested by the hypnotist. This is because hypnosis often triggers the 'rapid eye movement (REM) state' we enter when we dream. This state of dissociation is typical of hypnosis as the client becomes dissociated from the 'real world.'

As with normal sleep, your unconscious doesn't allow you to 'act out' your dream. So by simply inducing hypnosis you can suggest numbness, or lightness, or even peace.

#### **Using evocative language**

Talking to clients about books they read and really enjoyed earlier in their lives, getting them to imagine they can be their own character in the book, and 'daydreaming' they too are part of the story, will also distract their thoughts from the pain. The same happens if they imagine themselves in a favourite TV programme or film.

We can also get them to imagine how it would feel if the area of the pain started to freeze to numbness and so on.

Giving the client an almost impossible task, such as typing on a computer keyboard wearing mittens are all distractions from pain. Evoking a time when they sat for such a long time their leg went numb, or slept on an arm and woke up to find their arm numb with pins and needles are good ones to try... Once the client is responding, we can move on to suggesting that this numbness is now spreading into the afflicted areas.

Hypnosis can be used to calm people pre-surgery and also to help them post-surgery.

If you are helping a client for acute pain after surgery, which is of course part of the healing process, you can suggest greater comfort and faster healing after surgery. Conversational hypnosis can reduce post-surgical pain.

The scientific pedigree of hypnotic analgesia (diminishment of pain without actual anaesthetic numbness) is well understood. Hypnosis can be used to help cancer patients reduce both the pain, nausea and anxiety of recovery.

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# Pain explained

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**It's easy to forget that pain is felt *not at the point of injury*, but in the brain where the information from the injured area is processed.**

That's why hypnosis is so powerful for pain reduction and management. Some techniques work well without hypnosis — but by adding hypnosis, results are more certain. Hypnosis works well because it is an amplifier of experience. So if we amplify things that naturally relieve pain, we will get results.

If the pain signal didn't exist, you'd never know when to seek medical attention so thinking of pain as a signal isn't a bad thing — while a sprained ankle hurts a lot, the pain reminds you not to walk on it too soon! Pain is a critical signal that calls for attention that should never be ignored.

## **How we experience pain**

Imagine that you accidentally put your foot into boiling hot water. You pull it out instantly because your unconscious mind causes you to act before you're consciously aware of the reason. You only feel the pain of the burn a fraction of a second later! This is because the pain receptors act more slowly than those that make you realise you have injured or burnt yourself.

## **There are two types of pain:**

**Acute pain** is sudden onset, like a burn or a broken bone.

**Chronic pain**, such as arthritis, is long-term and likely to be long term.

Hypnosis is highly effective in combatting both! For example, pain and swelling can be reduced with hypnosis if it's used sooner rather than later. Hypnosis can be used effectively to combat chronic pain, greatly reducing the pain of long-term physical injury by moving pain to the background where the conscious mind doesn't notice it.

## **Pain is a subjective experience**

Pain and suffering are not the same, yet both are subjective. One person may have a crushed limb but thinks so little of it that suffering is not significant. Another person may feel like they're dying from an ingrown toenail!

Example: A man was out with his friends on his birthday and he got very drunk. When he woke up the next morning, he discovered he had broken his leg by stepping into the road and being run over by a motorist who had not stopped. The leg was now wrapped in a cast and the pain was unbearable. Only later did he discover that his leg was actually uninjured. His friends waited for him to pass out drunk, and a medical student has supplied the cast. Like magic, his pain vanished as soon as he realised truth! Suggestion can be a powerful thing!

When people think about hypnosis, they typically think of stopping smoking or being made to run around like a chicken. But dealing with pain is where hypnosis really shines!

In the late 1800s, Scottish surgeon James Esdaile worked in Calcutta with the East India Company. Over twenty years, Esdaile performed 300 serious operations without pain and reduced surgical complications without ever using anaesthetics because anaesthetics hadn't been invented yet. In his landmark book, *Mesmerism in India*, Esdaile explains how he used Mesmerism (hypnosis) to perform major surgery free of pain. By the 19th century, British hospitals were using hypnosis for anaesthesia, but the practice was abandoned when

scientists discovered chloroform. This new chemical anaesthetic was faster than hypnosis and saved time, and the effect of hypnotic anaesthesia were forgotten.

## **Hypnosis for pain management in the 21st century**

Today, thousands of dentists and doctors use hypnosis for painless dental treatments, surgeries, outpatient procedures, first aid for burn injuries, allergies, and even irritable bowel syndrome. In the '90s, Dr. Stanley Fisher even wrote about how hypnotising patients' pre-surgery resulted in greater relaxation and faster recovery. Hypnosis for pain management has become mainstream

Much of the pain we experience is more a result of anticipation, which makes pain worse. In other words, the worse we think something will feel, the worse it *will* feel. Even using what are known as 'painted words' can cause pain to feel worse.

Avoid using words such as 'pain' or 'agony' with a hypnotised patient simply because the mere mention of those words will have a negative effect on the subject's perception of the pain. When a doctor speaks those 'painted words' it can even have a more significant impact than that intended. Negative words or suggestions can be even more disastrous to a client's perception of their pain which might then become worse.

By framing pain as *discomfort, that bad feeling, or pressure*, hypnotists can avoid inadvertently amplifying the client's pain. Suggestions must be given in positive language.

### **Beginning treatment**

First, ask the client '*How bad is the pain on a scale of 1 to 10 right now?*' 10 being the worst kind of unbearable pain, and 1 being a very mild pain. The number they give you is the starting point. At the end of the first 'run through' you can easily gauge the client's pain reduction progress and show the client they have improved.

### **Techniques for pain management**

#### **1. Sell the Science!**

Explaining the underlying science will build rapport with the client. Setting the right frame is vital for getting good results, especially with pain management. Remember... anticipation makes pain worse! A positive attitude will lay the groundwork in a positive, confident way.

Before the session starts, inform the client that there are many effective ways of dealing with pain and that '*you are a mind with a body, not a body with a mind!*'

The human mind is powerful. It can produce feel-good chemicals like dopamine and serotonin. But it can also release morphine-like endorphins, that reduce pain.

#### **2. Teach the client how to relax...**

**Relaxation can produce analgesic effects. When we relax, the brush endings of the nerves move further apart, which means fewer pain impulses cross the synaptic gap.**

Tension makes the pain worse, whereas hypnosis allows profound relaxation. Relaxation will change the client's perception of pain. The more profoundly you can relax your client, the less pain they will feel. During hypnosis, direct suggestions will reinforce this.

If you're getting good results, make sure you give a post-hypnotic suggestion to the client that whenever they need to, they will be able to relax so the discomfort subsides naturally.

### **3. Specific direct suggestions can help clients reduce inflammation and chronic pain.**

All methods of dealing with pain will benefit from adding hypnosis and the most effective way of using hypnosis for pain or discomfort is to use direct, simple suggestions for health and well-being — including suggestions for relaxation.

Any disorder that responds to anti-histamines or anti-inflammatory drugs will respond to hypnosis. By giving direct suggestions for the reduction of discomfort and inflammation, hypnosis can magnify these results.

*“...And as you continue to relax... that old discomfort just fades... you can relax deeply... and you notice a comfortable coolness... spreading right through the area that used to bother you... that's right... feeling really good again... and healing quickly now...”*

### **4. Use Metaphors or guided imagery to reduce pain**

A metaphor is a way of explaining something in terms of something else. If someone says their feelings towards another person are ‘cooling’, we know they don't mean temperature! Metaphors work because we intuitively understand them!

When it comes to pain, metaphors like ‘putting out the fire’ can help reduce inflammation. Remember... the more you believe what you're saying, the more your client will accept it.

Suggestions of cold or coolness can be potent when turning down the dial of pain and discomfort. Imagining freezing-cold water sprayed on a burn can reduce the pain and even speed up healing!

### **5. Give the client the keys to the Control Room**

This technique is a perfect example of the use of guided imagery. Allowing the client to use an imaginary control room to reduce pain and inflammation is easy.

1. Induce and deepen hypnosis, suggesting complete relaxation
2. Get the subject to imagine a control panel that controls all body systems
3. Tell the subject to find the dial (or lever) that controls their pain
4. Have the subject reach out and turn the pain down from (for example) 8 to 4
5. Do the same with the dial that controls inflammation
6. Do the same with the dial that speeds up healing
7. Repeat steps 4, 5 & 6 until the pain has reduced to a more comfortable level.

### **6. Change pain by shifting submodalities**

We all experience the world around us through our senses, but we don't respond to the world itself. We react to our internal experience of the world by a system of *submodalities*.

Submodalities are the building blocks of the subjective human experience. When we react to an event, such as the feel of pain, we don't respond to the external event itself, instead, we react to how we *perceive* the event and we do this through different sensory *modalities*.

- Visual system,
- Auditory (or hearing) system,
- Kinesthetic (or feeling) system.

These 3 modalities can be broken up into *submodalities*.

Submodalities are the way we process information and make sense of the world. We store all our experiences in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (feeling) terms. By reprocessing information, we can change the meaning and experience.

For example, a picture's visual modality can have bright or faint submodalities. A sound can be loud or soft, close or distant. Feelings can be warm or cold or even unpleasant. The number of submodalities is unlimited.

Simply put, when you change the submodalities, you will automatically shift the person's perception of the experience.

Let's use a headache as an example. Ask yourself what colour it is and imagine taking it out of your head and letting it float in the air in front of you. Now change the colour and put it back in your head. By changing the colour of the pain, you are indirectly changing it. When you put it back as a feeling, it will have changed. That's because the colour representing the headache was your brain's interpretation of the headache itself. When you change the colour, the perception of the headache experience also changes.

Changing pain directly in the kinesthetic (feeling) modality can be problematic, which is why I try to stick to visual and auditory suggestions. In comparison, these are easy in comparison! By turning a physical feeling into an image or a sound, you will achieve an almost instant reduction in pain because you are changing the submodalities.

## **7. Over-describe the pain**

To over-describe something means breaking it up into smaller and smaller parts. In other words, the more detail you include in the suggestions, the more successful the treatments likely to be. Asking an unhealthy injured client to describe their pain in increasingly minute detail will make the pain more abstract and eventually meaningless. Or at least that's the theory...

One problem is, not all clients have the varied vocabulary to be able to do this — some clients may struggle to find the right words, in which case it falls to the therapist to assist.

You can ask if the pain is worse in certain areas and get the client to indicate the area the pain is located. Questions as to the nature of the pain — is the pain sharp, dull, burning, throbbing, tender, searing, nagging, pulsating, shooting, excruciating, violent... etc?

## **8. Send the pain away**

Get the client to imagine they are looking at their body in a mirror. The idea behind this is the dissociation caused by the imagination will separate them from the pain. Creating dissociation is easy — and most effective — with hypnosis. As a rule of thumb, the greater the dissociation, the greater the pain relief.

**Here are a few ideas you could use to create dissociation:**

- Get the client to imagine they are floating out of their body
- Get the client to imagine they are watching themselves from a safe distance
- Get the client to imagine they are the doctors and able to reduce the pain simply by touch

**The great thing about dissociation is it works for both pain and emotional upset!**

## 9. Changing focus

You don't want your client to allow pain to occupy too much space in their daily life. Pain cannot be allowed to be a part of their identity, a part of who they are. Remember to tell your client, *"You are not the pain. The pain is simply something you currently feel, but it's not you."*

Focusing on the pain is the exact opposite of dissociation and distraction. Clients should be encouraged to focus on the things they enjoy, such as reading, hobbies, music, knitting... *anything* except the pain!

## 10. 'Glove anaesthesia'

Getting a hypnotised client's arm to float in the air is a good way of grabbing their attention. You can then continue to give suggestions of coolness and numbness spreading through their hand. The aim is to achieve anaesthesia, which means feeling... but no pain!

Suggesting the numbness then flows to the other hand and doubles as it does so is known as 'compounding'. We can get the numbness to flow to a foot, doubling in intensity as it does. By moving it back to the original hand while doubling it every time, we can usually get a profound numbness in that hand. Now the client can place their hand where pain relief is required. The numbness and suggested anti-inflammatory effect will flow into the troubled area and bring relief.

When we change our breathing, it changes a lot of other things. Yoga practitioners and martial arts enthusiasts already know this and use the technique all the time. It simply involves getting client to breathe in (possibly coloured) 'healing light' and send it to the pain affected area while exhaling and relaxing.

Thanks to the work of James Esdaile and the discovery of hypnotic anaesthesia, we can use hypnosis to reduce or even eliminate pain — without side effects. Pain only exists in the brain, so using hypnotic techniques to change how we think about pain can have powerful effects.

There's no need to be limited by just one technique. By layering different techniques, it is possible to significantly reduce pain. Applying various techniques will greatly enhance the chance of finding one that works for that client.

It's a good idea to suggest that all the good feelings and relief they experience while in hypnosis will stay with them, and continue when the session is finished.

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# The Science

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## **Hypnosis and significant benefits beyond pain relief**

Clinicians in clinical hypnosis trials noted that the overwhelming majority of participants reported high levels of treatment satisfaction, whether or not they experienced clinically meaningful pain relief. Moreover, a large proportion of patients — including many who did not report clinically meaningful decreases in average pain — reported at follow-up sessions that they continued to practice the self-hypnosis skills they were taught.

[Jensen, Barber, Romano, Hanley, et al., 2009](#); [Jensen, Barber, Romano, Molton, et al., 2009](#)

To help understand what appeared to be an anomalous finding, a cohort of patients who received self-hypnosis training were contacted to determine their reasons for their continued use of self-hypnosis skills despite an apparent lack of benefit on average daily pain. Consistent with what the study clinicians reported, almost all of the study participants reported high levels of treatment satisfaction

[Jensen et al., 2006](#)

In addition, the great majority of those who continued to practice self-hypnosis reported that they experienced *temporary* pain relief when they listened to audio recordings of the treatment sessions or practiced self-hypnosis on their own without the recordings. In short, hypnosis treatment has two potential effects on chronic pain. First, as described above, the treatment can result in substantial reductions in average pain intensity that is maintained for up to 12 months in some (but not all) patients. This finding supports the hypothesis that hypnosis treatment can result in sustained changes in how the brain processes sensory information. However, for greater numbers of patients, hypnosis treatment teaches self-management skills that patients can (and most do) continue to use regularly, resulting in temporary pain relief.

Participants were asked to describe the positive and negative effects of hypnosis, and of the 40 different effects elicited, only three were negative.

[Jensen et al., 2006](#)

Moreover, and to our surprise, only nine (23%) of the positive descriptions of hypnosis were pain-related. Non-pain-related beneficial treatment effects included improved positivity, relaxation, and increased energy. These non-pain-related benefits were reported despite the fact that the hypnotic intervention was script driven and focused exclusively on pain management. These results are consistent with qualitative comments in the literature regarding the beneficial “side effects” of hypnosis.

[Crawford et al., 1998](#); [Stewart, 2005](#)

## **Clinical Implications of Findings From Hypnosis Clinical Trials**

The key findings from the hypnosis clinical trials reviewed above have three important implications for maximising the benefits of hypnotic pain treatment. Specifically, they indicate that clinicians should:

- include suggestions for both immediate and long-term pain relief
- include suggestions for benefits in addition to pain reduction
- use the knowledge about the multiple benefits of hypnosis to enhance treatment outcome expectancies.

## **Immediate and long-term pain relief with self-hypnosis**

Given the evidence that hypnotic analgesia treatment can result in both long-term pain relief and learning skills, clinicians providing hypnosis treatment should ensure that they take full advantage of both of these outcomes — they should include hypnotic suggestions for automatic' and long-term reductions in pain. They should also provide suggestions that facilitate the regular use and practice of self-hypnosis, such as:

*“...and when you practice self-hypnosis, your mind can easily enter this state of comfort, and the comfort will stay with you for minutes and hours ... the more you practice, the easier and more automatic this will be ... and the longer the beneficial effects will last.”*

### **Addressing issues beyond pain reduction**

Given the established beneficial effects of hypnosis for other issues, suggestions for addressing additional pain-related issues should also be included. In chronic pain, there are almost always associated symptoms that deserve attention. For example, between 50% and 88% of patients with chronic pain report problems with sleep. For these patients, suggestions can be given to help clients fall asleep and return to sleep if they wake up, and to feel rested in the morning.

Patients who are involved in physical therapy or who are maintaining a regular exercise program can be given suggestions that they will feel confident in their ability to engage in and maintain exercise, such as being able to draw on an inner strength and experience reserves of energy when needed and appropriate. Hypnosis can also include suggestions for improving activity levels.

[Jensen, 2011](#)

It is also important to remember that people with chronic pain often suffer from clinically significant depression and anxiety. Mood can be influenced using hypnosis.

[Alladin, 2010; Yapko, 2001](#)

### **Good practice involves giving patients with chronic pain realistic hope**

Not all patients with chronic pain are going to experience pain relief with hypnosis. This brings up the question of how expectations for treatment can be enhanced. We now tell patients something along the lines of the following to enhance expectancy without giving unrealistic expectations:

*“Many patients find that they experience meaningful reductions in their pain that maintain for a year or more after treatment. Others report that they use the skills they learn to experience pain relief for a few hours at a time when they use self-hypnosis for just a minute or two. Even when the treatment does not result in significant pain relief, almost everyone reports some benefit, such as improved sleep, an increased sense of overall calmness and well-being, or reduced stress. I don't know at this point which of these benefits you would experience if you choose to learn self-hypnosis ... but would you like to find out?”*

### **The effects of hypnotic analgesia on pain-related brain activity**

Hypnotic analgesia influences different areas of the nervous system that are involved in the processing of pain rather than having a single, unilateral mechanism.

One of the most important findings from recent neurophysiological studies of pain is that there is no single 'pain centre' in the brain that is responsible for the processing of pain. We already know that pain is associated with activity in and interaction between a number of different areas of the peripheral and central nervous systems, each of which contributes to the overall experience of pain. The cortical areas most often activated during pain are the thalamus, anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), insular cortex, primary and secondary sensory cortices, and

prefrontal cortex. The relative contribution of each of these areas to the experience of pain varies as a function of the nature of the pain stimuli.

[Apkarian et al., 2011](#)

### **Hypnotic inductions are associated with changes in brain states consistent with pain Relief**

Cortical neurons fire at different frequencies, and the speed at which they fire is associated with different brain states. Moreover, the experience of pain is associated with more neurons firing at relatively fast frequencies (beta, 13–30 Hz) and fewer neurons firing at slower frequencies (alpha, 8–13 Hz).

[Bromm & Lorenz, 1998; Chen, 2001](#)

Hypnotic suggestions result in changes in brain activity consistent with those observed in individuals who experience pain relief. With hypnosis, there is a decrease in relative beta activity and an increase in relative alpha activity. Thus, the neurophysiological processes associated with pain perception appear to be related not only to the site of activity but also to general activity levels that likely transcend specific areas of functions. Therefore, hypnotic analgesia may influence pain both by altering activity in specific areas and by facilitating shifts in general brain states.

[Crawford, 1990; Williams & Gruzelier, 2001](#)

### **Hypnosis is more than just imagination**

Clinical implications of the findings from hypnosis imaging studies on the effects of hypnotic analgesia on neurophysiological processes have two important clinical implications.

First, to maximise effect, hypnotic treatment should target multiple specific pain domains. Second, clinicians should take full advantage of the calming effects of hypnosis on brain activity and processes, so hypnotic suggestions should target multiple pain domains.

We have already discussed the importance of providing suggestions to improve outcomes other than just pain relief (sleep quality, well-being, activity level, etc.) when treating chronic pain with hypnosis. This same principle applies when treatment targets pain relief, because pain is a multidimensional construct with sensory, affective, and evaluative components. Each of these domains can be influenced by hypnotic suggestions.

It follows that clinicians using hypnosis for pain management should target their suggestions to the different brain areas that process pain. In fact, clinicians will likely be more effective if they are guided by knowledge of the specific brain areas that are linked to pain.

Some of the pain-related domains that appear to have specific cortical associations include intensity and quality, bothersomeness or unpleasantness, a sense of comfort and physical integrity, reduced threat value and negative implications of the pain, and the ability to 'screen out' discomfort and 'let in' comfortable sensations. Current thinking in pain physiology suggests that hypnotic suggestions should target several of these domains rather than any one of them.

[Jensen, 2011; Patterson, 2010](#)

### **Taking advantage of the cortical calming effects of hypnosis**

Like other similar treatments, the induction phase of hypnosis may have analgesic effects in and of itself for some patients. The hypnotic induction itself — even before any suggestions are made for pain relief — results in a shift of brain activity in a direction consistent with that of someone experiencing pain relief. Hypnosis is not necessarily the only technique that can

be used to shift brain states. Some clinical trials comparing hypnosis to relaxation training have failed to detect differences in outcome for these two treatments for headache pain relief. [Patterson & Jensen, 2003](#)

Response to relaxation training appears to be associated with hypnotisability. Many meditation strategies have also been shown to result in shifts in EEG activity consistent with those that follow hypnosis such as an increase in the slower alpha rhythms.

[Fell, Axmacher, & Haupt, 2010](#)

It can sometimes be difficult to distinguish between hypnosis, relaxation, autogenic training, and guided imagery interventions. Certainly, relaxation training and guided imagery often contain elements that look very much like a hypnotic induction, and hypnosis often includes suggestions for relaxation and use of imagery. However, clinical hypnosis usually involves suggestions not only for perceptual changes but also for other clinical benefits, while these other techniques tend to focus on just a single outcome. The fact is, hypnosis has larger effects on pain than does simple imagination.

[Derbyshire et al., 2004](#)

The implication is that hypnosis is more powerful than simple imagery. However, it is important to acknowledge the potential beneficial impact of imagery in changing perceptual processes. For many patients, using imagery for pain reduction can be a powerful component of the treatment. The possibilities for using imagery in this way are endless. For example, *“Imagine that your pain has a colour. That colour is now changing”* or *Notice that you are lying with your back in a stream of healing water... cool and comfortable”*.

Many patients will benefit from the inclusion of imagery as long as it does not bring up unpleasant or irritating memories, but clinicians should realise that not all patients find imagery or visual processing easy and that a variety of other components of hypnosis should also be typically included, for example enhanced relaxation, changing the focus of attention, altering negative cognitions.

[Jensen, 2011; Patterson, 2010](#)

## **Unresolved Clinical and Theoretical Questions**

Our understanding of hypnotic analgesia has increased substantially. An important review in the early 1980s noted that there were no randomised controlled trials to support its usefulness as a viable treatment for chronic pain.

[Turner & Chapman, 1982](#)

Based on the findings from the clinical trials and neurophysiological studies cited in this article, we can conclude that hypnosis and hypnotic analgesia have specific effects beyond those attributable solely to placebos. Yet there still remains a lack of consensus on what hypnosis is, and there are significant unanswered questions regarding the mechanisms and best clinical use of this approach to pain management. Of course it could be that the very use of the word ‘hypnosis’ has an effect that has been overlooked!

There are 4 important, if not critical, questions to consider.

1. What is/are the mechanism/s of hypnotic analgesia?
2. How can hypnosis best be combined with other therapies?
3. What is the best dose of hypnosis, and does ongoing hypnosis practice improve outcome?
4. Can hypnosis enhance acceptance of pain?

We cannot address possible mechanisms of hypnotic analgesia without introducing some of the different theoretical perspectives of hypnosis. During the later part of the 20th century, a huge amount of effort was put into arguing the relative merits of the two primary theoretical models of hypnosis — dissociation and socio-cognitive models. Yet despite significant debate and decades of research, neither perspective has been universally adopted by hypnotists. At the dawn of the 21st century, there has been a growing call to view hypnosis from multiple perspectives.

The very concept of hypnotisability has remained stable across the decades. Moreover, an individual's baseline hypnotisability score is a much more powerful predictor of subsequent response to hypnotic suggestions than any number of interventions designed to boost hypnotic responding.

[Frischholz, Blumstein, & Spiegel, 1982](#)

'State' theorists (that is, those who believe hypnosis is a stand-alone or unique state) have argued that hypnotisability is a genetically loaded characteristic that helps predict which subjects are more likely to respond to suggestions. As a former stage hypnotist I can stick my neck out and say that this theory seems to hold water. In the long summer seasons of the 1980's on the island of Jersey, it became clear that there may indeed be a genetic connection. The success rate with members of the same family was noticeably higher than with those subjects who were not related. Of course, there is always the possibility that this connection could partly be because members of the same family would have the opportunity to discuss their experience of being hypnotised on the stage, and that these conversations would serve to increase suggestibility because they confirmed the 'realness' of hypnosis.

The same presumption of 'realness' may also explain the consistent associations found between measures of hypnotisability and response to hypnotic analgesia in laboratory settings, where the professional medical background lends a degree of authority.

**Socio-cognitive models** Researchers who espouse socio-cognitive models of hypnosis argue that the concept of an altered state is not needed to understand or explain hypnosis. Instead, they maintain that hypnosis is best explained by the same socio-psychological factors that explain all behaviours whether or not they involve expectancy, subject motivation, contextual cues in the social environment, demand characteristics, and role play.

[Kirsch & Lynn, 1995; Lynn, Kirsch, & Hallquist, 2008](#)

In support of this line of reasoning, measures of outcome expectancies partially mediate the benefits of hypnotic analgesia.

[Montgomery and colleagues \(2010\)](#)

In addition, the clinical approach of such theorists working with chronic pain will often appear very similar to conventional cognitive-behavioural interventions that have been popular for the past three decades.

### **Understanding the effects of hypnosis on pain from the perspective of more integrated theories**

In the same way bio-psychosocial models have replaced more restrictive psychological or biological models of pain, models of hypnotic analgesia that take into account both neuro-physiological states *and* traditional psychological factors — such as expectancy, motivation, social cues, etc. — may ultimately prove to have more explanatory power than models that exclude either category of factors. There are at least two directions that such theories and research might take in understanding hypnotic analgesia.

[Oakley, 2008; Oakley & Halligan, 2010](#)

First, it is possible that state and non-state theories explain different components of hypnotic analgesia — each model may ultimately prove to be most useful with different patients. For example, patients who score high on tests of hypnotisability may respond better to hypnotic analgesia interventions based on a state approach — e.g. hypnotic inductions and suggestions that focus on dissociation — whereas those who score in the medium or low range on hypnotisability measures may respond better to hypnotic treatments based on socio-cognitive hypnotic protocols or at least may be less influenced by their general hypnotisability.

[Martínez-Valero et al., 2008](#)

Alternatively, some investigators have suggested that hypnotisability is not a trait that lies on a single continuum but rather that there may be different *types* of hypnotic responding. For example, T. X. Barber proposed three basic types of hypnotic responders: fantasy-prone, amnesia-prone, and positive-set responders.

[Barber \(2000\)](#)

If people can be reliably classified into different types of responders, hypnotic interventions might be developed that could best match each individual, ultimately resulting in more positive outcomes for more people. Research examining these questions would be useful!

Which potential mechanisms of hypnosis might be considered in the development of a more complete model? Several mechanisms have been postulated as important elements of hypnosis.

[Barnier & Nash, 2008](#)

All of these have been hypothesised to be associated with pain reduction. These include:

- Relaxation: [Edmonston, 1991](#)
- Use of distracting imagery: [Chaves, 1994](#)
- Focused attention: [Barabasz & Barabasz, 2008](#)
- Expectancy: [Wagstaff, David, Kirsch, & Lynn, 2010](#)

We have also gained an understanding of some potential mechanisms that *do not* contribute to the effects of hypnotic analgesia. We know, for example, that although hypnotic responding can be influenced by outcome expectancies, hypnosis has specific effects over and above those associated with placebos.

[Hilgard & Hilgard, 1975](#)

Research suggests that the effects of hypnotic analgesia are not mediated by naturally produced opioids or distraction mechanisms such as those produced by immersive virtual reality.

[Barber & Mayer, 1977; Patterson, Hoffman, Palacios, & Jensen, 2006](#)

We know that hypnotic suggestions can affect specific areas of the brain that process pain depending on the wording of the hypnotic suggestions. One important next step is to investigate how hypnosis allows subjects to better access and impact those areas of the brain.

It could be that subjects experiencing hypnosis suspend critical monitoring and judgment (*as is the case in stage hypnosis! Thank you, don't mention it,*) and, as a result, have more direct access to and influence over critical areas of the central nervous system. This process may be enhanced by any number of factors: focused attention, deep relaxation, and disruption of linear (i.e., critical) thinking. (*Again, it is impossible to ignore the correlation with stage hypnosis.*)

Neuro-physiological research provides preliminary support for these ideas in that individuals who score high on tests of hypnotisability (highs) clearly process information differently from those who score low on hypnotisability tests (lows) and that many of the differences in processing are associated with those (frontal) areas of the brain associated with executive control. Research is needed to further examine the potential role of frontal/ executive brain areas in response to hypnotic analgesia and other hypnotic treatments.

[Jensen et al., 2013](#)

### **What are the additive effects of hypnosis?**

There has been only one published study that examined the effects of combining hypnosis with another intervention in the treatment of chronic pain.

[Jensen et al., 2011](#)

Although the findings from this study were positive — a ‘hypnotic cognitive therapy’ intervention resulted in additional reductions in pain intensity, catastrophising cognitions, and pain interference, over and above the effects of either hypnotic analgesia or cognitive therapy alone. It was essentially a pilot study and more research examining the effects of combining hypnosis with other established pain treatments is clearly needed.

[Lang and colleagues \(2000\)](#)

One significant study randomly assigned 241 patients undergoing cutaneous vascular and renal procedures to groups receiving self-hypnotic relaxation ( $n = 82$ ) or standard care ( $n = 79$ ). The researchers found patients who received hypnosis as well as used less procedure room time, had more hemo-dynamic stability, used fewer sedating/analgesic medications, and reported less pain and anxiety than those who did not receive hypnosis.

In a second analysis, using data from this study, reported that the participants in the hypnosis group incurred medical care costs that were less than half those incurred by the participants in the control group.

[Lang and Rosen \(2002\)](#)

Even more dramatic cost savings were seen in 200 patients scheduled to undergo breast cancer procedures. Patients in the hypnosis group received fewer sedating or analgesic drugs (propofol and lidocaine) and reported less pain, fatigue, nausea, discomfort, and emotional upset than patients in the control group. In a cost analysis, the authors reported that care of the hypnosis group cost the institution an average of \$772.71 less per patient than the control group, a difference that was accounted for largely by reduced surgery time and personnel and equipment costs for the hypnosis group.

[Montgomery and colleagues \(2007\)](#)

### **Can Hypnosis Enhance Acceptance of Pain?**

The notion of enabling patients to manage their chronic pain through such approaches as mindfulness meditation training (and therapies that incorporate mindfulness) is becoming increasingly popular. In such approaches, efforts to directly resist or reduce chronic pain are thought to contribute to suffering. In other words, having a goal of a direct reduction in chronic pain might *decrease* the quality of life for some patients.

Clearly, hypnosis can be used to reduce pain intensity or otherwise change the experience of pain for some individuals. Hypnosis could potentially serve some patients well as a tool for helping them to accept rather than seek to change their experience of pain. For example, during the hypnotic process, patients can be encouraged to examine pain from a distance or

to accept the notion that all perceptual experiences are temporary. But this approach was abandoned because the primary problem many patients face is suffering rather than pain.

Teaching patients to focus away from pain with the understanding that dwelling on it only enhanced pain-related suffering is a start. There are parallels to this thinking in some Eastern philosophies that view suffering as a direct result of a person's resisting or seeking to change their experience, as opposed to accepting it. In any case, it is possible that hypnosis can not only facilitate the ability of patients to reduce their pain but can also increase their acceptance of their experience of pain, which would ultimately result in a decrease in suffering.

[Patterson, 2010](#); [Fordyce \(1988\)](#); [Patterson, 2010](#)

## **Conclusions**

Chronic pain management remains one of the biggest challenges in health care. Hypnosis is an undeveloped but highly promising intervention that can help to address this problem.

Findings from controlled trials show that hypnosis is effective in reducing chronic pain intensity on average but that there is also substantial individual variation in outcome.

Importantly, hypnosis for chronic pain has few negative side effects. In fact, with hypnotic treatment, most patients report positive side effects, such as an improved sense of well-being, a greater sense of control, improved sleep, and increased satisfaction with life, independent of whether they report reductions in pain.

A burgeoning literature on the neurophysiological impact of hypnotic analgesia has guided both theoretical and clinical work. We have learned that hypnosis has a measurable impact on neurophysiological activity and functioning of pain. Importantly, depending on the specific wording, hypnotic suggestions can target specific pain domains and outcomes, as well as activity in specific brain areas.

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# Pain Management



for hypnotherapists

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# Physical Pain Management

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**This might be more detailed than you need, but just take the best bits. All the approaches are similar, but there are differences between the way we tackle physical pain, emotional pain, Anxiety, and Panic attacks.**

**They are all linked, and you have to cherry-pick the best.**

The technique includes visualisation techniques.

It will take half an hour at most to read through it. Most of it is repetitive, so you just have to pick and choose the bits you think will work.

## Overview

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During World War II, Dabney Ewin M.D. was drafted into the U.S. Army as a medic. As the Americans advanced across Europe, Ewin, in charge of an army field hospital, discovered his unit had run out of morphine. Ewin's inspired solution was to instruct the other medics and nurses to administer injections of distilled water. The effect was dramatic – nearly 70% of the wounded personnel reported a significant decrease in pain, proof of the power of suggestion if ever one were needed.

Word of Dabney Ewin's achievement made him famous and was a watershed moment in the history of hypnosis.

Dabney Ewin continued with his study of hypnosis and was a great proponent of its curative effects until his death in 2020. I was very proud to appear with him on the Channel 4 programme *'HYPNOSIS – The Big Sleep'* in 1993.

Spanish surgeon Dr. Angel Escudero has performed thousands of surgical operations without anaesthetic. Dr. Escudero claims he does not use hypnosis... just a few well-chosen words which engage patients imaginations, and focussing their attention on the task in hand. In this... he is right.

Hypnosis can control pain and it regularly produces outstanding, almost miraculous results. Hypnosis is also beneficial for childbirth, stress management and anxiety states.

Approximately 80% of people who try pain management techniques are able to maintain manage their pain in the long term.

Hypnosis is a wonderful example of the positive power of the mind and enables clients to take control of their own feelings and emotions.

Hypnosis is a simple way of relaxing the body which is effective in treating high blood pressure, pain & anxiety. Some therapists claim that hypnosis can be used to treat migraine, although I would be very careful of using it for this.

Montreal Children's Hospital, Quebec, Canada, is using hypnosis after the results of a pilot project suggested it can reduce pain and anxiety in patients.

The trial also resulted in a reduction in the amount of medication administered to perform medical imaging procedures – meaning patients don't move. Johanne L'Ecuyer, medical imaging technologist at the hospital.

L'Ecuyer and colleague Maryanne Fortin went to France to meet teams at Rouen University Hospital Centre and Hospital Femme Mere Enfant in Lyon.

Examinations generally done under general anaesthesia are now done under hypnosis.

A French hypnotherapist trained some of the members the hospital's medical imaging department.

80 examinations were conducted between January and September 2019, focusing on two imaging procedures known to trigger anxiety the insertion of a central catheter and a procedure used to examine a child's urinary tract and bladder.

Ultimately, the success of the procedure comes down to trust.

The important thing is that the patient feels confident with the person doing the procedure. The hypnosis starts as soon as the patient is in the waiting room.

Crucial to success are the therapist's verbal and non-verbal cues – eg. smiling and showing empathy, which lays the foundation for a bond of trust with the patient.

The therapist will guide the patient into an imaginary world (establishing a story) so they will dissociate themselves from the procedure that awaits.

The patient decides what he wants to talk about – sports, the beach, movies, music etc.

That subject will be discussed throughout the procedure.

Everything that happens during the procedure must be related to this story:

An injection becomes the bite of a mosquito;

A product that heats the skin becomes the sensation of the sun and a machine that rings becomes a police car that passes nearby.

The important thing is that the technologist associates what is happening outside the patient's body with what they see in their head.

It requires creativity on the part of the technologist, imagination, a lot of patience, a lot of empathy and a lot of kindness.

Now, there's a queue of staff wanting to take the training.

*Reported by The Canadian Press on Dec. 5 2019.*

The Journal of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (USA) reported that volunteers who tried these visualisation techniques managed an average of a 64% reduction in chronic pain. *Hypnosis makes this even more powerful.* Osteoarthritis and rheumatism respond particularly well to hypnosis.

The pre-talk introduces the client to some simple approaches which can improve pain management over time.

It is designed to help the client;

- build hope and expectation
- become aware that their situation is not as hopeless as they thought
- and that they can actually look forward to feeling much better.

Metaphors are 'stories' that use imagination. Imagination can be used to show your client they are in control of their comfort level, and that they can alter it at will through a series of mental exercises. Chronic pain can be reduced to a manageable aspect of life.

### **Examples of the kind of Metaphor you can use to help relaxation and remove pain:**

- Gentle waterfall washing away the pain / being filtered through your body
- A warm beam of light
- Volume control – turn the dial lower
- Melting Ice – pain melting away
- Piercing a hole to release pressure
- Feel of snowflakes falling on your skin
- Lying in the sun, feeling the sun's warmth

### **Always remember... you are a mind with a body, not a body with a mind:**

Many diseases and illnesses are linked to negative mental activity. The body knows how to heal itself, all it needs is clear message from the mind.

# Background

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When people are in pain, or stressed and anxious, they feel as if they are not in control of their own body. Their own psychological processes are out of control. When people are anxious, they can feel they are not in control or even helpless.

People with chronic conditions often fear that they will be condemned to a life of pain and suffering. Pain is an unpredictable phenomenon, but it helps to know that perception of pain is something that can be significantly altered by carefully directed attention.

You can help clients who are suffering from chronic conditions to discover that they can significantly affect the levels of pain that they encounter.

It may not be possible to remove the causes of the stress, but it is possible to control the feelings and emotions associated with the stress.

There is always a physical constituent of stress: most people feel it in the tummy, or head, or increased heartbeat, or perspiration, or even feelings of helplessness.

Symptoms of tension can be eliminated, or at least reduced. Clients no longer need to be victims of stress responses.

Some hypnotherapists refer to 'autogenous training' but all that really means is that the client is taught to practice and master the techniques that will enable them to control their negative feelings and emotions.

I believe that one clue to success is to keep everything as simple as possible, as we will see during this masterclass.

The techniques are easy to learn, and the more the client practices them, the more effective they will be, the better they will feel, and the quicker they will experience change.

Exercises literally take just a couple of minutes and are very similar to meditation – something everyone can learn to do.

However, these methods focus on physical experiences rather than abstract, mental experiences.

Exercises can be carried out whenever necessary, but some clients like to do them first thing in the morning. They are best done in a quiet place, but can be done in at home or in the office or anywhere with a little privacy.

Before clients attempt to practice in their office for example, they should have practiced at home so that they are familiar with the process. There is no right way to do the exercises – every experience is unique to the individual.

Remember, trying too hard may make it harder to relax. It doesn't matter if the mind wanders from time to time – this might even be a good thing, because it takes attention away from the feelings of pain or stress.

The exercises all involve relaxation and suggestions such as warmth, comfort, calm, safety and security. Simple effective words and phrases encourage relaxation.

Practicing the techniques will exercise control over autonomic functions, and affect physical feelings of pain. Results can be immediate.

Always remember, the therapist is not a miracle-worker; this is a team effort between client and therapist!

The session, and later the exercises, can be performed in a sitting or lying position, with eyes closed.

Some people might find it easier to loosen clothing or even take off their shoes. The main thing is that the client must be comfortable. Don't allow them to cross their legs.

Some clients like to be covered by a blanket – you could ask them to bring one with them.

It is also possible to add a form of 'healing' in these sessions by standing behind the client and (if they are sitting) placing your hands gently on their shoulders or on their head.

You must get permission to do this before the hypnosis starts, and also warn them when you are going to do it so it doesn't come as a shock or a surprise.

## Information for the client

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Hypnosis has been successfully used for many years to help people manage chronic pain. A review of controlled clinical trials on hypnosis for pain relief, published in *Psychological Bulletin* in 2003, found that hypnosis has repeatedly been shown to reduce the perception of pain, to decrease the need for painkillers, and to reduce the length of stay needed in hospital after surgery.

Pain is nature's way of telling you there's something wrong – It's a signal system designed to keep us safe, and it shouldn't be ignored. Pain can disrupt daily life and make it difficult to focus on work, or enjoy the things you normally enjoy.

In an ideal world, we would only ever have pain when it was useful, just like when you accidentally touch a hot stove. The pain immediately makes you instantly pull your hand away from the stove and within a short time, the pain would fade away.

Pain is a signal of the nervous system – your experience of pain can, and often does change depending on how much attention you give it. When you're tired, stressed, or preoccupied with the pain, or feeling emotionally overwhelmed from having to deal with it, this can make the physical sensations of pain worse!

Hypnosis has been successfully used for many years to help with pain management. The 'pain gate' that transmits pain via the nerves to the brain can be closed once you know how.

For example, when you feel more calm and relaxed, or when you're absolutely focused and absorbed in an engaging activity, such as reading a really good book, you may have found that any physical discomfort tends to diminish, receding away into the background, making it much more manageable.

You can tap into this natural ability to tune out pain and discomfort by directing your mind to process those pain signals in a different way.

It is possible to help ease pain by purely psychological means.

Hypnosis is not about the conscious mind – hypnosis is about making changes in the unconscious mind, through deep relaxation, guided imagery, and suggestion, so you can feel more calm and relaxed throughout the day, sleep more soundly at night, and generally feel better in yourself.

Lower back pain is also associated with emotional issues like anxiety, anger, stress and depression. However, most lower back pain is temporary, and typically gets better within a few days or weeks.

How we feel when we're tired or hungry or emotionally stressed can affect the level of pain we feel. Expectation especially can reduce or intensify pain.

People who are anxious or depressed, or both, feel more pain. Relaxation is the key!  
People who have good social support experience less pain!

# Assessing the Client

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When dealing with pain, you should have a clear idea of whether hypnosis is suitable for this client. Always remember to ask the following questions:

- Have you been to see any other health care professional about this problem?
- Are you taking any prescribed medicine at the moment?
- Have you ever been diagnosed as suffering from a mental illness?
- If the answer to any of these questions is 'YES', please give more details...
- Is there anything else you feel I should know?

Remember... pain is nature's way of letting the body know there's something wrong, so for example, you should be particularly wary of treating headaches without understanding the cause of the headaches. Would it be dangerous for the client to remove the pain in any way?

## 1. Identify the type of pain / where it is / when it is worse or better?

- **WHERE** – do you feel it? – count down from the number to zero
- **INTENSITY** – on a scale of 1 to 10? – send it away so it gets smaller
- **SHAPE** – jagged or rounded? – make the edges go blurred or faint
- **SIZE** – draw it? – reduce the size as it moves away – as it melts away
- **COLOUR** – what colour would you give the pain? –

What is your comfortable colour? –

Change the colour of the pain to the colour that is most comfortable...

## 2. Get the client to describe the symptoms of the pain.

- Are they the symptoms of fight & flight? For example, dry-mouth, increased heart rate, skin going pale etc.

## 3. Understand the history of the problem. What activity is likely to cause the pain?

## 4. Ask how the client's life would one improved without the pain or the anxiety.

In effect, what we are doing is creating Emotional Distance.

# SCRIPT — Physical Pain Management

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I want you to imagine... a dial in front of you... just like the volume dial you might find on a CD player... imagine in front of you a dial... and at the top of the dial... in your mind's eye... there is the word... RELAX...

So I want you to imagine you are turning the dial from 10... to 9... and as you do that... **imagine every muscle in your body... every nerve... every fibre... every sinew... every joint... every nerve... relaxing...** like a bundle of elastic bands slackening off... every time you turn the dial to a lower number... it increases your relaxation...

Now in your imagination... move the dial from 9... to 8... and as you do that... every muscle in your body... every nerve... and every fibre, relaxes... more... and more... and you feel... and you become... calmer... and calmer... relaxing... more... and more...

Imagine turning the dial from 8 to 7... your level of relaxation increases again... you feel and you become... more... and more... calm... more and more relaxed... drifting... deeper... and deeper...

Again imagine turning the dial, down from 7 to 6... and as you do that, every muscle in your body, every nerve, and every fibre, relaxing more and more.

Imagine turning the dial down from 6 to 5... drifting deeper... and deeper... relaxed... feeling and becoming... calmer... and calmer... more relaxed...

Imagine turning the dial from 5... to 4... relaxing more and more... feeling and becoming... calmer... and calmer...

Again, in your imagination, turn the dial from 4 to 3... you're feeling more and more relaxed... more and more calm... more and more peaceful... more and more tranquil... drifting deeper... and deeper... into relaxation...

Imagine turning the dial from 3 down to 2... feeling even more relaxed... calmer... drifting deeper and deeper... into relaxation... into complete physical and mental relaxation...

Imagine turning the dial from 2 all the way down to 1... feel yourself relaxing more and more... feeling and becoming calmer and calmer... and more relaxed...

Imagine turning the dial from 1 all the way down... to zero... **every muscle in your body... every nerve... every fibre... every sinew... every joint... every nerve... relaxing...** drifting deeper... and deeper... into this wonderful state of relaxation... more and more calm... more and more relaxed... calm... peaceful... a feeling of well-being filling your whole mind and body... you are calm... peaceful... a feeling of well-being filling your whole mind and body...

As you continue to relax... more and more with every breath... I want you now to imagine another dial inside your mind... again this dial goes from 10, all the way down to 1...

On the top of this dial is the word PAIN... because in your life you've been experiencing pain and discomfort... and in a few moments... I'm going to get you to imagine turning your pain down...

if your level of pain is at 6... imagine turning that dial down to 5... to 4... to 3... to 2... and to 1...

You've probably had times in your life when you've had discomfort or pain... maybe times when you have stubbed your toe... hit your thumb with a hammer... and if there was a dial in your mind... instantly that dial would have shot to number ten... but then over time... that dial then begins to decrease... to drop from a 10... to an 8... to a 6... to a 4... to a 2... barely noticeable... down to 1... and then gone completely...

In a few moments I want you to focus on where you're feeling discomfort... focus your attention on that place... and as your attention goes to that place... imagine looking at the dial... look where the number is...

Now imagine reaching for that dial... and turning that dial down... one number at a time...

As you do that... notice how the muscles around that area... relax... and as the muscles in that area become and begin to feel more and more relaxed... notice how that discomfort begins to relax and fade away... and becomes less and less....

Imagine turning the dial down to the next number... and as you do that, notice even more how the muscles in that particular area... feel and become even more relaxed... notice again how the discomfort reduces even more...

From this moment on... if there's any time you're feeling discomfort in any way... all you need to do is imagine looking at the dial... notice what number the dial is at... and then in your imagination... turn the dial down.... each number relaxing the muscles in that particular area... and as the muscles relax in that particular area... the discomfort reduces as well... becoming less and less...

- **WHERE** – do you feel it? – count down from the number to zero
- **INTENSITY** – on a scale of 1 to 10? – send it away so it gets smaller
- **SHAPE** – jagged or rounded? – make the edges go blurred or faint
- **SIZE** – draw it? – reduce the size as it moves away – as it melts away
- **COLOUR** – what colour would you give the pain? –
- **What is your comfortable colour?** –

**[Change the colour of the pain to the colour most comfortable colour.]**

**[The client should be taught how to do this in their own time.]**

Each and every time you use this technique... the positive effects will grow stronger...

Each and every time you use this technique... the positive effects get better and better...

Each and every time... the positive effects will grow stronger and stronger for you... the positive effect will become more and more real for you...

# SCRIPT — Another Approach to Pain Management

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I want you to imagine... or think... or pretend... (whatever works best for you...) imagine, think, or pretend... that **a wonderful beam of light [or gentle waterfall] is shining down on you [or washing gently over you]**... just imagine that... imagine a wonderful beam of light shining down on you... and this wonderful beam of light is washing away any and all feelings of discomfort... this wonderful beam of light giving you a pleasant feeling of comfort... a wonderful feeling of complete relaxation...

Every muscle... every nerve... every sinew... every fibre of your being feels completely relaxed... completely calm...

As you relax more and more... a wonderful feeling of calm and complete relaxation is beginning to spread throughout your entire body... a wonderful feeling of calm and well-being... a wonderful feeling of complete relaxation spreading down from the top of your head... right down to the muscles of your face... completely relaxed... completely calm...

A wonderful feeling of calm is spreading throughout your entire body... a wonderful feeling of well-being, spreading into the muscles of your neck... down to the muscles in your shoulders... completely relaxed... completely calm...

A wonderful feeling of calm is spreading down into all the muscles of your arms... all the way down to your fingertips... just a wonderful feeling of peace and calm... a wonderful feeling of relaxation... every muscle... every fibre in your body feeling completely relaxed...

As you bathe in this wonderful beam of light... giving you a wonderful feeling of comfort... spreading now into your chest... and down into your stomach... every muscle completely calm... every muscle completely relaxed... feeling a wonderful soothing feeling of calm...

The warm light spreads into your legs... all the way down to the very tips of your toes... every muscle... every nerve... every fibre of your body completely relaxed... completely calm and comfortable...

It feels good to feel so relaxed... it feels good to feel and to be completely calm... and it feels good to feel and be absolutely comfortable in every way... a wonderful feeling of comfort... a wonderful feeling of relaxation spreading throughout your entire body...

Every muscle feeling completely relaxed... every fibre of your body feeling comfortable in every way... completely calm... completely relaxed and comfortable...

I'll give you a few moments as you bathe in this wonderful light... and during these few moments of silence... this feeling of calm... this feeling of complete relaxation... will grow stronger... and stronger... during these few moments of silence you really will feel more and more comfortable in yourself...

**The light, (the water)** is washing the pain away... it's getting less and less... being washed away...

# SCRIPT — Pain management for Chronic Pain

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Now it's time to relax the muscles around the area of pain... to relax the muscles beneath the area... and around the area... and allow them to relax in their own way... in their own time...

There's no need to consciously try to relax them... you can allow yourself to gently drift down deeper and deeper into relaxation... and let all those muscles just slacken off...

Imagine all those muscles like bundles of elastic bands... slowly loosening... going loose, limp, and relaxed...

Now you can begin to guide your attention down through the body... and relax all those muscles little by little...

You can remember now how it felt the last time you were really focussed and immersed in an activity you really enjoy... and how it felt when you were totally focused on reading a book... or a hobby... or watching sport... or playing with your grandchildren...

Now you can imagine you're on top of a mountain **[or wherever the client's favourite place is]**...

Imagine gazing out over a magnificent landscape etc...

Imagine... visualise... a cool breeze blowing through you... blowing away what needs to be blown away... lightning the load, reducing the pressure...

Imagine how fiery heat can turn into into something much cooler... more distant... calmer... or how pressure can appear... and then just fade away... fade away into the ether...

See how sharp sensations can melt away... like the soft fall of snowflakes...

And how any remaining sensations... no matter how intense they had once been... can melt away...

the whole of your body and mind filled with a deep sense of wellbeing...

Now you can sleep more soundly and deeply at night... and you feel calmer... and every day... you realise you are free to live your life...

On the mountain... in the forest... **[wherever the client has chosen]**... you can relax even deeper still... as the breeze quietens down and all becomes still... a stillness that goes through your whole body... relaxing even deeper... bringing clarity and calm...

Now you can discover how it feels when you're even more deeply absorbed in enjoyable activities... how you can forget about all the negativity... and immerse yourself in doing something really satisfying and enjoyable... going deeper and deeper and feeling more and more calm... both in body and mind...

## SCRIPT — Pain management for Chronic Pain (2)

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**A good way to start this session is by using Jacobsen's Progressive Relaxation, where the client tenses and then relaxes different body parts.**

As your body begins to relax... from the top of your head... all the way through your body... right down to the tips of your toes...

Because if you try to block an emotion... just like tensing the muscles and pretending not to feel it... that might work for a while... but eventually, it will sap your energy...

But when you let go... you can breathe a real sigh of relief... And in just the same way... it feels so much better to let go of an emotion... and breathe a sigh of relief...

Just like sitting by a stream... and watching the water flow gently by... watching the leaves and twigs flow by... without needing to try to stop it... just calmly watching it flow past as the sunlight reflects off the water...

The gentle sound of the stream lulls you into deeper comfort... letting those feelings flow past you... because there's no need to hold onto them...

And in the same way... all the negative feelings can also be let go... as you calmly watch the stream flow by...

As you continue to enjoy that full free flow of energy... imagine drifting out of yourself... noticing how the [COLOUR] has changed into a more relaxed colour... a colour you feel comfortable with... a colour that you find relaxing...

Notice how calm you feel right now... notice how relaxed you feel right now... as the stream continues to flow...

Notice how the messages going up the nerves of your spine... like urgent worried voices... have been so hurtful... and such a distraction... so much so that it's perhaps been difficult to think straight...

There have been times when the discomfort has been very unpleasant... times when the colour would have been very strong and bright... and how there have been other times when you noticed the discomfort calm right down... and you felt a bit better... when those messages going up your spine became quieter and less frequent... when the colour of discomfort seemed to dim and cool down...

Now you can become very practised at calming down that colour and discomfort all by yourself... just by taking a few minutes here and there in the day... to breathe slowly and deeply... and relax your body...

Just like the stream... carrying away that pent-up energy... releasing emotion... watching the stream carry away the leaves... as you remember how to drift right out of yourself... deliberately cool and calm...

To see the colour dimming down... shrinking... quieting... dwindling... as you continue to relax even deeper... and notice what it's like to be so much calmer and more detached from

that discomfort... as you let that spine know now... that you're doing all you can... and the message has been heard...

So now it can quiet down... so you can do what you need to do to heal yourself...

Over the days and weeks ahead... you might notice spontaneous memories of this session coming to mind if you feel that discomfort...

But you will also notice you now have an instinctive ability within you... to breathe... to release... to watch from a distance... and to calm down the colour of it... to dim it down... shrink it down... and relax around it... like relaxing by a cool stream... any time you wish...

As you breathe in and out, you realise that when you are busy... when you're thinking about something other than the pain... you don't don't feel it so much.

Imagine your central nervous system... connected to your brain... can be relaxed and turned off an on at will...

**[Use the COLOUR, SIZE, INTENSITY, SHAPE method >>>>>]**

Now resting on a beautifully soft bed with soft, comfortable cushions.

Imagine drifting on these cushions... imagine how light they are... imagine how light you feel...

There are times when we can be detached from our bodies... when we sleep... the we dream at night... when we are totally involved and absorbed reading a good book.

Imagine the warm sun shining down on the painful areas... imagine the warmth... the sheer comfort...

Now imagine that you can store this feeling in a secret place... imagine that you can access that feeling whenever you want to... just by closing your eyes and putting yourself back in that safe cocoon, where nothing can hurt you, nothing can harm you...

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# Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)



**for hypnotherapists**

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**Andrew Newton**

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# Background

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## **Hypnosis is an effective and tried and tested treatment for Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).**

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a condition of the digestive system and also a prevalent gastrointestinal disorder. Symptoms include cramps, diarrhoea, constipation and bloating.

About 1 in 10 people will be affected by IBS at some time in their lives. Other conditions have very similar symptoms, so it's important to have a doctor verify that your symptoms are due to IBS and not another illness.

The good news is that IBS can be temporary, and there are ways to make it disappear.

It's not always possible to predict a flare up, or how badly you will be affected. Some sufferers are unwilling to leave home because of this. Consequently their lives can become restricted.

There is a link between stress and IBS. The severity of symptoms is linked to the levels of stress people experience.

Paradoxically, this is good news! It means there are things you can do, yourself, without medication, to improve the condition.

You might not always be able to change the *source* of stress in your life, but you can dramatically change how you *respond*. And this will change what happens in your gut.

### **This is how:**

Hypnotherapy routinely produces positive results in more than 80% of patients. It is used for IBS by the NHS (British National Health Service).

Hypnosis helps calm stress levels and influences the digestive system to soothe and heal.

Hypnotherapy helps clients to:

- feel much more relaxed about life generally
- notice they are feeling more comfortable and secure
- feel more and more confident using visualisation techniques that help healing
- find creative ways of managing sources of stress
- Start enjoying life again

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a condition of the digestive system, with symptoms such as abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, constipation and feeling bloated.

IBS affects between 10 and 15% of people at some time in their lives.

The exact causes of IBS are still unclear, but we know that IBS can be caused by long periods of stress or anxiety.

The pain and discomfort of IBS, and the fact that it's hard to predict flare-ups can interfere with quality of life. Many people find it an upsetting and distressing condition to deal with.

There is no single, one shot cure for IBS, but there are a variety of treatments for it – hypnosis is one of them.

A large number of studies have verified that hypnosis can be highly effective in alleviating the symptoms of IBS, and, in contrast to other treatments, hypnosis has no side effects!

In a 2001 study at the University of Manchester in England, 300 patients with IBS were given twelve sessions of hypnotherapy, and when they were interviewed five years later, 71% of them reported that they experienced lasting improvements in their condition.

Hypnosis can help with IBS in a number of ways.

First, regular deep relaxation counteracts the stress response. When people are under stress, the brain detects a threat to personal safety and activates the fight or flight response. When this happens, the adrenal glands release adrenaline, which in turn activate certain responses in the body, such as sweating, faster breathing, increased heart rate etc., gearing you up for action.

It also switches off other responses that are not essential to survival in the short term, such as sex drive, immune system... and digestion.

In the short term, fight and flight will save our lives, but if you are constantly feeling stressed for hours, days, weeks, or months, your adrenal glands will be *constantly* side-lining your digestion. So... what was an adaptive response – switching off non-essential functions for short term survival – becomes maladaptive as the immune system, sex drive and digestion stop functioning properly – and permanently.

When you relax, there is some temporary respite...the immune system works better and your digestive system gets the oxygen and blood it needs in order to do its job properly.

### **Deep relaxation is the antidote to ongoing stress.**

Hypnosis is used to help manage pain, accelerate healing, and to calm inflammatory conditions.

Using hypnosis and visualisation, people can learn to directly influence their own bodies, and that includes alleviating the discomfort of IBS.

Hypnosis uses healing imagery and hypnotic suggestion to help the mind soothe and heal your digestive system.

# Hypnosis as an effective way of treating IBS

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**IBS, which strikes up to 15% of people, has no cure.**

Symptoms can range from abdominal pain to erratic bowel habits and even iron deficiency or vomiting in the most serious cases. In comparison, just 23% of volunteers who had educational lessons on how to cope with IBS reported the same benefit.

Researchers found 50% of patients who received hypnotherapy saw relief from their agonising symptoms after just one year. Experts say the method, which relaxes the brain to treat the gut, is proving to be successful in trials.

**Dr Olafur Palsson of the Center for Functional GI and Motility Disorders, North Carolina said:**

*'Psychological treatment has shown a high success rate in improving IBS... Using the brain to help the gut is a different mechanism than using medications that treat the gut directly... Fundamentally, if the usual medical approaches don't seem to be working well and you have persistent symptoms, this could be a good option.'*

A study led by the University Medical Centre in Utrecht, enrolled 342 participants with IBS aged between 18 and 65 from 11 hospitals. The patients were randomly assigned into three groups for the research, published in the journal *Lancet Gastroenterology and Hepatology*.

The first group of 142 patients received 45-minute therapy sessions twice a week for six weeks which included progressive relaxation and soothing imagery. Positive visualisation was given to patients while they were given suggestions about how they could gain control over their digestive system to reduce feelings of pain and discomfort. This 'gut-directed' therapy was based on treatment developed at the University Hospital of South Manchester in the UK in the 1980s. They were also given a CD so they could practice self-hypnosis exercises at home for 15 to 20 minutes every day.

A second group of 146 volunteers received the same treatment, but in groups.

The third (control) group received 'educational supportive therapy' consisting of six-hour sessions every two weeks in a group. Coping mechanisms, complaints, and the impact on patients' social lives were discussed, and dietary information was given according to guidelines. After three months, 41% of those in the individual therapy reported a relief of symptoms, 33% who took part in the group hypnotherapy, reported relief, and only 17% in the control group.

The benefits appeared to last nine months longer for those who received hypnotherapy. Hypnotherapy may change patients' mindset and internal coping mechanisms, enabling them to increase their control over autonomic body processes, such as how they process pain and modulate gut activity. People with more severe symptoms of IBS respond to this form of treatment

The hypnotherapy patients were more likely to fully engage in this time consuming form of treatment, which is often perceived as the last chance for improvement of the disease.

Nothing has been definitively explained as the cause of IBS, which is largely seen as psychosomatic as symptoms can be triggered by a stressful event or anxiety.

# SCRIPT — Irritable Bowel Syndrome

There have been many pleasant and enjoyable times in your life, and there may be some treasured memories too... fond memories of holidays, time spent with friends or loved ones... or with someone special...

With those memories are feelings of joy... of good health and wellbeing... there were times in your life when you had no symptoms whatsoever... when everything was perfect... when your digestive system was calm and content and relaxed... when it was just quietly doing its job... easily and effortlessly... and when you didn't even notice it because you felt healthy and fulfilled... and stress and anxiety free...

You can remember those times now... as if they were yesterday... and by remembering them, you can experience that feeling of being free again... and you can free yourself enough to feel free like that again... to be able to just enjoy your life again...

As you think back to those times... to those happy, wonderful, more simple times... to a really enjoyable time in your life... Think for a moment of a really pleasant time... a time when you were healthy... and remember how that felt.

Remember that feeling and imagine how it felt... and how it feels now that you can experience that feeling again... just by remembering it... remembering the sights and sounds and smells and laughter and all the joyous moments of that time...

Remember the contentment... the feeling of security... the feelings of enjoyment of those happy times...

And remember how your stomach and your digestive system felt... every part of your body doing its job without you even having to think about it...

The feelings of safety and security... surrounded by friends and the people you love...

Now imagine being able to absorb those moments... and make those feelings part of today...

And imagine your digestive system also remembering those times... those feelings of safety and security... when everything was alright.

Now... as you allow yourself to relax... even deeper into this comfortable safe space... your unconscious mind is making positive changes inside you... positive, lasting changes...

Imagine you are standing under a cool refreshing waterfall... in a place that feels like a beautiful paradise...

The water is a nice temperature... like being in a cool shower on a hot summer's day... and the water is cool... refreshing... soothing... *healing*...

And the water is healing your mind and body right now... as it flows through your body... cleansing your whole system... flowing down through your head... all the way down through your neck and your chest... down through your arms... down through your chest... down through your stomach... down through your legs... all the way down to the tips of your toes.

Cool, pure, life-giving water!

And if there are any obstacles... the water gently washes them away... because that's what water does... until the parts of you that most need that pure, refreshing, healing water start to feel better... much, much better...

Imagine you can bathe in that calm, soothing, life-giving water... as it flows right through you... this gentle, revitalising flow of cool water... cleansing every part of your body... continuing to heal... to purify... and soothe the whole of your body... healing your digestive system... returning it to health...

Every day in every way... you're feeling better and better... more and more relaxed... Every day in every way... you will feel more and more in control... taking ownership of you life once more...

**Where you've been these las few months/years, has been like a prison cell where the door was always left wide open...**

**Now you can walk out of the PRISON CELL into the light...**

You can walk forward – Feeling your feet firmly on the ground, feeling grounded & earthed

**You have nothing to feel guilty about / nothing too feel ashamed of...**

**So SMASH THROUGH the BARRIER!**

From now on... you will feel more confident, more self-assured, more determined to succeed...

You will feel energetic – alive – empowered

Now you've CUT the CORD... You'll be taking CONTROL & RESPONSIBILITY for your life...

You'll **MANAGE BETTER** – you'll make **BETTER CHOICES** – the **RIGHT CHOICES**...

You'll CONTINUE to **LEARN & DEVELOP**

**Self-Love is OK – Shout “I'M ALIVE! I'M OK!”**

*Because YOU ARE WORTHY!* – not confused & upset...

Nothing can hurt you – nothing can harm you...

And in the days and weeks ahead... you will **feel** what it's going to be like to realise that your digestive system has become much calmer... more at ease...healthier... with a deep sense of wellbeing...Soon, you will notice that the old symptoms are now less frequent... less intense... or faded away altogether...

Imagine a deep sense of peace and wellbeing... because your body has returned to a state of calm and contentment... as your unconscious mind absorbs all these healing suggestions, and makes good use of them... so that every day in every way, you feel healthier and healthier.

# Tips for Clients

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- Cook homemade meals using fresh ingredients, especially vegetables
- Keep a diary of what you eat and any symptoms you get – this will help you avoid things that trigger your IBS
- Find ways to relax
- Get regular exercise – fifteen minutes brisk walk a day is enough and it will make all the difference
- Try taking Probiotics for a month to see if they help
- Don't delay or skip meals
- Don't eat too quickly
- Don't eat lots of fatty, spicy or processed foods
- Don't eat more than 3 portions of fresh fruit a day (a portion is 80g)
- Don't drink more than 3 cups of tea or coffee a day
- Don't drink lots of alcohol or fizzy drinks

## **How to ease bloating, cramps and farting:**

Eat oats, eg. porridge

Eat up to 1 tablespoon of linseeds (whole or ground) a day

Avoid foods that are hard to digest, eg. cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, beans, onions, dried fruit

Avoid products containing a sweetener called sorbitol

Ask a pharmacist about medicines that can help, like Buscopan or peppermint oil

## **How to reduce diarrhoea:**

Cut down on high-fibre foods like wholegrain foods (such as brown bread and brown rice) nuts and seeds

Avoid products containing a sweetener called sorbitol

Ask a pharmacist about medicines that can help, like Imodium

If you keep getting diarrhoea, make sure you drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.

## **How to relieve constipation:**

Drink plenty of water to help make your poo softer

Increase how much soluble fibre you eat – good foods include oats, pulses, carrots, peeled potatoes and linseeds (whole or ground).

Ask a pharmacist about medicines that can help (laxatives), like Fybogel or Celevac.

## Healthy eating is important.

The appropriate proportions of the five food groups we should eat to ensure a balanced diet will help us remain fit and healthy.

**Fruit and vegetables:** potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, and other starchy carbohydrates;

**Dairy and alternatives:** beans, pulses, fish, meat, other proteins and oils & spreads.

The sensitive digestive systems of people with IBS may react to certain fruits and vegetables that contain poorly absorbed sugars, fats, wheat based cereals, dairy products, hot spice, coffee, and some high fibre foods.

## What can I eat?

It is still possible to eat a rich and varied diet while restricting foods that may upset your digestive system.

### Some guidelines:

- Reduce your intake of onions and pulses (peas, lentils, and beans).
- Reduce your intake of apples and fruits that contain stones – but citrus fruits like oranges and lemons are fine.
- Reduce your intake of milk to no more than half a pint a day, use lactose-free milk or supplement with calcium enriched plant milks.
- Reduce high fat dairy foods.
- Reduce your intake of fatty meat.
- Avoid hot spicy food – and yes, that includes curries!
- Avoid caffeinated drinks such as coffee and colas. Coffee, tea and many 'energy' drinks contain caffeine, which may stimulate colonic spasms.

### Drinks:

It is important to drink enough fluids during the day to keep you properly hydrated, but you need to be careful of some drinks.

**Fizzy carbonated drinks** can tend to cause bloating.

**Alcohol** can irritate the gut and can cause diarrhoea. Drink no more than two units per day and have at least two days a week off.

### Polyols:

Sugar-free mints, chewing gum, flavoured water and other low calorie products may contain sorbitol, mannitol or xylitol, which can cause diarrhoea if too much is consumed. Better leave them out altogether.

You can use a symptom tracker to record whether any reactions occur when you eat a particular food. To be sure, the reaction should occur on three separate occasions before you remove it from your diet. Take this record with you when you go and see your doctor.

You can ask your GP to refer you to a state registered dietitian if you are struggling to make changes or if you are losing weight as a result of dietary restrictions.

### **Above all – remember your IBS diet is not a life sentence!**

As your symptoms improve and you gain confidence, you can gradually start to include the foods you have given up – one group at a time – to slowly get back to a normal diet.

You can make changes to your diet in a slowly-but-surely planned manner so you will be able to see if it's working. Make the easy changes first.

For young children with IBS. Parents will need to discuss their child's diet with their doctor or paediatrician.

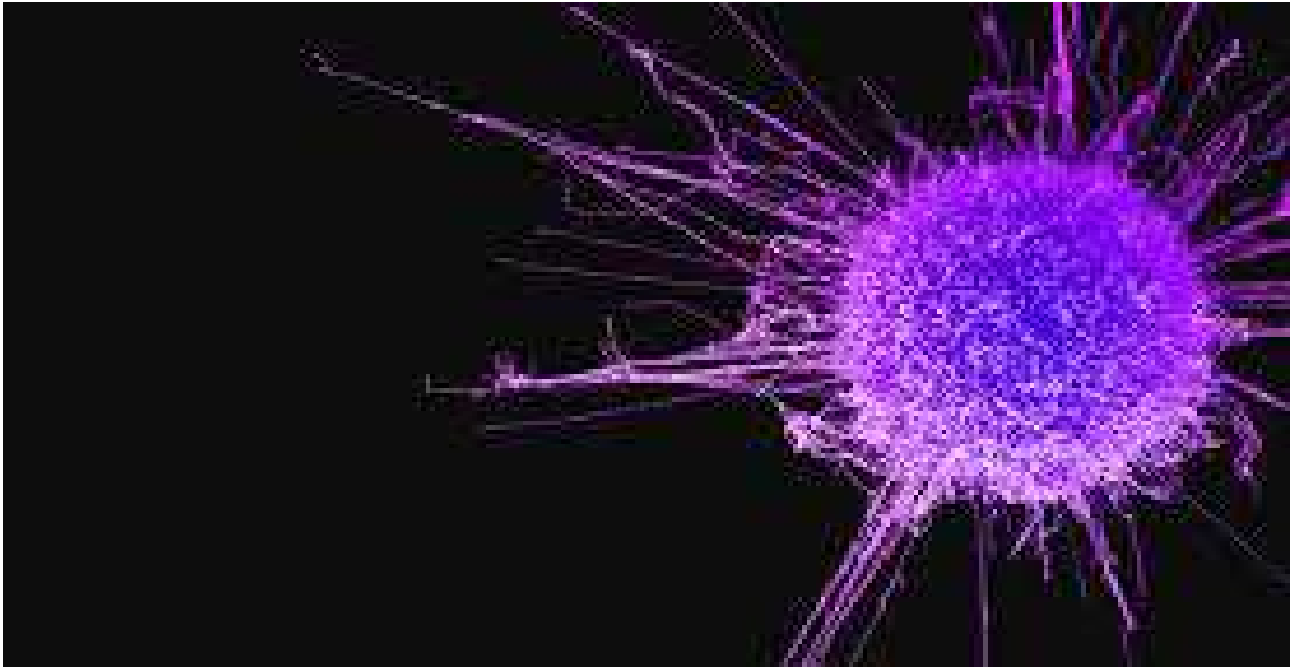
Cooking for IBS is all about finding a balance between bland and boring, and getting your essential nutrients.

Don't rely on restaurants or ready meals unless you can really study the ingredients. A lot of chefs use lots of butter & cream and garlic & onion, and may also use high fructose corn syrups.

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# Treating anxiety in cancer patients



**for hypnotherapists**

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**Andrew Newton**

[www.newtonhypnotherapy.com](http://www.newtonhypnotherapy.com)

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# Introduction

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A. E. Housman discovered that lines of poetry flowed into his mind during afternoon walks, Mozart composed more easily while riding or walking, and Charles Darwin, having struggled for years studying biology thought of the theory of evolution when he was taking a carriage ride. French mathematician Poincaré spent years trying to solve Fuchsian functions (a type of equation) and got nowhere, but finally discovered the solution when he was walking by the sea while on holiday!

Hypnosis seems to enable the brain to solve problems which otherwise would not be solved by freeing the creative mind from being constrained to think in preconceived ways and enables the mind to explore other solutions.

Albert Einstein said “*imagination is more important than education.*”

Henry Ford said of success: “*if you think you’re can, you’re right... etc*”

The same is true of most cancer patients – if they believe they can beat it, more often than not, they will!

When dealing with cancer patients, it is *not* possible to cure the cancer with hypnosis and it would be very unwise to try to do so. But *is* possible to reduce a patient’s anxiety.

One tried and tested technique is to get the client to hold on to good feelings by getting the mind to make an ‘anchor’ of *confidence* before, during and after chemotherapy.

One simple technique would be to get the client to make a fist - a symbol of determination to get better and recover.

Another is to concentrate on relaxing the whole body – a standard hypnotic technique.

Yet another is to get the client to mentally go to their ‘special place’.

The goal is to encourage the client to relax so deeply that time seems to pass quickly (this is especially useful during sessions of chemotherapy when the patient is lying still for long periods of time).

The aim is get the patient to feel *pleased* that they have taken another step forward to recovery.

Radiotherapy and chemotherapy cause patients to feel fatigued and sometimes experience hot flushes.

One x 15 minute relaxation session has been shown to reduce stress by 60 to 70 percent. This has obvious benefits for normal sleep and mood.

Stress on the other hand, can be an immunosuppressive. Hypnosis can offset immunosuppression by using guided imagery.

Example: Get the patient to visualise cancer cells being destroyed or melting...

Cancer patients are in a situation where ‘The Sword of Damocles’ is hanging over them. They fear future events... they live in the land of What if...??? thinking ‘*what if it comes back...?*’

It is the *HERE and NOW* that really matters and it is the *HERE and NOW* that influences recovery!

# Remaining Positive

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## NOTES:

Your expectations will have an effect on your experience! If you expect to experience something in a particular way, your unconscious mind will do all it can to make this expectation come true.

A lot of people say they wake up in the morning just before the alarm goes off. This happens purely because their unconscious mind *expects* to wake up at a certain time! In the same way, doctors' *expectations* often *influence* the *experience* of their patients. This is the reason placebos work, because patients believe them to be bio-active or psycho-active. However, it is their *expectation* that is the real cure.

When you expect things to improve, they often will because you can manage your expectations. You can reasonably expect that your body will do its best for you.

Someone with a positive outlook might not expect that everything will turn out well, but that there will at least be some improvement which will eventually lead to a cure. Whatever happens, they'll handle it in the best way they can. On the other hand, someone with a negative attitude will tend to believe that any outcome will inevitably be negative. People with negative attitudes may feel that when things are going well they're too good to be true, but when things are going badly, that's the way it's supposed to be!

Developing a positive approach can have a very positive impact on health generally, and, creating a sense of positive expectation – even just *imagining* things going well – can actually help with immune function.

What is probable and what is possible are two very different things... *possibility* is a flexible boundary.

There are certain things we know are true:

Firstly, strongly remembering wellness can encourage the body to heal – imply by *feeling* better. This is because physical feelings are closely aligned to your memory and imagination. It's not just your mental health that responds to your imagination. This is exactly what happens in hypnosis when someone imagines feeling happier or more confident and the same techniques can be applied to physical illness.

We know that rest and relaxation are great promoters of physical and mental health and well-being. So, even before you start engaging in the constructive use of your own imagination and unconscious positive expectation, merely relaxing regularly will boost your levels of comfort and immune function.

The numbers speak for themselves: patients who undergo hypnosis or use self-hypnosis have a 60 to 70 percent better chance of recovery!

# SCRIPT:

There will have been plenty of times in your life when your body was aware of its own strengths and was healthy.

You can remember one of those times right now... even a specific time or place, when you felt full of energy and vitality, when you were happy and healthy...

Think of a place that was special to you... maybe walking on the beach or in the forest, or even at grandma's house... remember the colours and sensations, the sights and the sounds, maybe the feeling of the sun on your shoulders... or the laughter of the people you were with...

Imagine walking along a path now... and get a real sense of how that felt.

As you take a look behind you, you can see the past stretch away into the distance... but as you look forward into the future, you can also see the road stretch out before you... It's a long road and it's going to take you many years to walk along it. The problem is that just at this part of the road, there are some obstacles, and you're going to have to walk around them, or even climb over them.

But in the distance is a beautiful, calming, healing light.

As you manoeuvre your way around these obstacles, you realise that although your progress is slower, you are still making some headway... a little at a time... as you carefully step over the potholes... and climb over the rocks... and push through the undergrowth... slowly but surely getting closer to the point where the road is clear again.

As you walk along this pathway, you realise that it will take time to get to the part where the road is clear again, but nonetheless, you know that you are making progress...

You are also starting to notice a real inner strength... a new and fresh vital strength... a new healing positive energy has started to course through your veins... beginning to build and gather momentum within you... like a positive light helping the whole of your body become strong and powerful once again... slowly but surely filling your should with a bright determination to overcome every obstacle...

As you continue to relax, you also know that even just relaxation will nourish and sustain you just where it's needed most...

As you look further down the path, in the distance, you can see yourself... strong and healthy and vibrant... you can see that positive focus and inspiring optimism `s you continue to rise to any challenge.

As you continue to relax... you can imagine yourself merging with that distant self... and actually experience being optimistic and strong and energetic...

As you do so... you can imagine that growing sense of pure healing positive energy and strength surging up through your feet... into your legs... and flowing all the way up into your heart and into your body... into your mind... into every part of you...

# Radiation Treatment Hypnosis

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## NOTES:

There is a large body of evidence that demonstrates that the mind can influence physical healing.

Dr Carol Ginandes at Harvard Medical School has completed a number of studies that showed that hypnosis could measurably speed up the healing of surgical wounds and even bone fractures. Hypnosis has also been shown to be a highly effective way of cooling and calming down inflammatory response in the body, as well as soothing and easing physical discomfort.

Dr Dabney Ewin, a burns specialist in New Orleans was famous for his effective use of hypnosis in emergency wards, giving patients powerful hypnotic suggestions that their injuries would immediately feel cool and calm and would remain cool and calm as they healed.

When compared to burns patients who did not receive hypnosis, Dr Ewin's patients experienced less swelling and discomfort, while their injuries healed significantly faster.

The exact same principles have been used to assist people undergoing radiation treatment, reducing inflammation and discomfort and optimising the healing and recovery process.

Before each radiation treatment, patients are asked to close their eyes for one minute and giving themselves pre-prepared suggestions that any areas affected by the radiation treatment will feel cool and comfortable and heal themselves.

It's important that clients listen to this session every day while undergoing treatment and for two weeks after the radiotherapy ends. The session is recorded so is accessible at any time.

## SCRIPT:

Remember for a moment, a time when you were embarrassed and you blushed. You felt the heat in your cheeks as they turned red... but after a short time, when you stopped blushing... your cheeks felt cool again.

Your body and mind is really just one system.

It's easy to imagine a cooling breeze now, cooling your cheeks... and you can easily imagine what it would feel like if this cooling breeze was directed to any other part of the body...

Imagine standing on top of a mountain... imagine the cool breeze cooling your whole body... a cool fresh breeze cooling cooling your skin... calming your mind... gently blowing right through you...

That cool, calm breeze can cool and calm every part of your body and mind as you relax

even deeper... breathing in the cool, fresh, mountain air... filling your whole body with that cool, clean, healthy fresh air...

Now, you can remember a wonderful time... a really enjoyable time... a time that makes you smile inside... a time of happiness and contentment... the good feelings... as you continue to relax deeper and deeper into this nice safe space, where nothing can hurt you, nothing can harm you... protected by an invisible cocoon... an invisible force field... where nothing can hurt you, nothing can harm you...

Our understanding of science and medicine are helping you back to full health... the doctors and specialists, with all their years of training and experience are also guiding you back to full health, just like any other kind of operation where once the surgery is completed, it takes the patient some time to recover completely...

In the same way, this treatment is also a proven, healing tool that will help your body return to full health... it just takes a little while... and in the meantime, it's OK to be completely cool, calm and comfortable as you heal... and it's OK to feel cool and comfortable... to notice the coolness and the comfort... that's already cooling... calming... and helping you feel even more comfortable...

So... before each treatment... you can close your eyes... and every time you exhale... every time you breathe out... you can feel yourself relaxing even more... drifting down into a reply relaxing calm and safe space... where nothing can hurt you, nothing can harm you...

And while you do this... it's OK to let yourself daydream... and remember those happier experiences in life...

And you can say in your mind... gently, but firmly...

"I will allow myself to feel cool and comfortable... I will allow all the parts of my body to be cool and comfortable... I will allow my body to heal" *[repeat]*

"I will allow myself to feel cool and comfortable... I will allow all the parts of my body to be cool and comfortable... I will allow my body to heal"

As you visualise your body healing, the process becomes second nature to you...

You can easily recall enjoyable times and happy memories as you relax even deeper still...

And you can say to yourself... "I will allow the areas that need healing to be cool and comfortable... I will allow the areas that need healing to be cool and comfortable... I will allow any areas that need healing to be cool and comfortable..."

Imagine now, a soothing, healing, light...

You can decide the colour of the light – it could be a cool blue light, or your favourite colour, or any colour you feel comfortable with...

This soothing, healing, light will permeate the areas that most need it... and that light will penetrate deeper and deeper... soothing... cooling... calming... ALL the cells in your body... soothing... cooling... calming...

You can say to yourself "It's OK for me to heal... It's OK for me to heal my body... It's OK for me to be healed from this treatment..." And as that happens... you can also look forward to the future... a future of healing and recovery.

It may be a long road yet to travel... but every step will take you nearer to your goal... to be healed and well again...

You will find it easy and effortless to remember this cool, calm feeling... you will find it easy and effortless to remember how it feels to be cool and comfortable... as you heal and recover over the coming days and weeks ahead... feeling calm and confident that the knowledge and expertise of the doctors and the specialists are guiding you through to full health and recovery...

Every time you listen to this session, you will feel even more cool and calm... and you'll feel better in yourself so that you can feel and experience even deeper comfort and ease within... as you heal and recover... and when you open your eyes, you will feel refreshed and alert...

# Easing feelings of nausea

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## NOTES:

Nausea is one of the more unpleasant parts of chemotherapy treatment. The side effects of chemotherapy differ from person to person and often depend on the type of chemo and the dosage. Some people get major side effects while other have very few.

Chemotherapy causes different types of nausea:

First, there is anticipatory nausea where patients feel nauseous in anticipation of the next treatment. This can be triggered by the 'hospital smells' or even the sight of a medical uniform.  
*[ref. Pavlov's dogs etc.]*

In fact, this is how post hypnotic suggestion works... something in the environment becomes linked to a response in the individual.

This session will teach clients to relax in response to triggers that may automatically result in nausea.

The second cause of nausea is the physical reaction that occurs around 24 hours of chemotherapy treatment. Again, this can be very mild, moderate or sometimes severe. Medication is often used to treat or even prevent nausea.

Sometimes nausea may not be related to chemotherapy, but whatever the cause, hypnosis can help.

The brain controls nausea and vomiting. Nausea is controlled by autonomic nerves, which control involuntary bodily functions such as heartbeat and breathing. Different irritants such as smells, tastes, anxieties, pain, motion or chemicals can trigger vomiting, which is reflex action.

Hypnosis is an effective way of influencing autonomic functions in the brain.

For example, people undergoing hypnosis can often influence healing rates, as well as skin temperature and even reduce pain levels – all things which are usually not under conscious control.

During hypnosis, clients can learn to calm involuntary responses and change instinctive reactions.

# SCRIPT:

Your body and mind is really just one system.

It's easy to imagine a cooling breeze now, cooling your cheeks... and you can easily imagine what it would feel like if this cooling breeze was directed to any other part of the body...

Imagine standing on top of a mountain... imagine the cool breeze cooling your whole body... a cool fresh breeze cooling cooling your skin... calming your mind... gently blowing right through you...

That cool, calm breeze can cool and calm every part of your body and mind as you relax even deeper... breathing in the cool, fresh, mountain air... filling your whole body with that cool, clean, healthy fresh air...

Now, you can remember a wonderful time... a really enjoyable time... a time that makes you smile inside... a time of happiness and contentment... the good feelings... as you continue to relax deeper and deeper into this nice safe space, where nothing can hurt you, nothing can harm you... protected by an invisible cocoon... an invisible force field... where nothing can hurt you, nothing can harm you...

Now, try to imagine this as a kind of 'out-of-body experience...' Imagine drifting out of yourself so you can see yourself on a cinema screen...

You're feeling so relaxed... so now you can imagine that you're watching a video of yourself having a session of chemotherapy... but watch the video as if it's being played fast forward, right from the beginning to the point where the session ends... and when the session ends you see that the 'you' on the screen feels very comfortable again.

Now you can play the video backwards... you can watch everything that happens on the video playing backwards very very quickly... as if you're watching and experiencing time moving backwards...

It would be strange to experience going backwards in time... through that whole chemo session... rewinding back through it very rapidly...

So imagine now going very rapidly back through that time... experiencing the seconds and the minutes and hours going backwards... experiencing everything in reverse... very very quickly... to the time before anything happened that day...

When you've done that... you can drift back into that deeply calming, relaxing place in front of the cinema screen... and watch the film of the chemo session again... from before the beginning to well after it's finished...

You can watch all this while feeling totally detached and calm... and you can totally detached and calm as you watch it in fast-forward again... right now... watch it in fast-forward again... watching the whole thing play on fast-forward... watching the time literally fly by...! And after the end... you can just stop.

So from now on... every time you watch it, you can easily make the whole chemo session fly by, both fast-forward and fast re-play... Every chemo session flying by in no time at all.

Now... you are going to find that association with the session and the film feels different and relaxed.

Right now... in your mind... imagine taking the remote control into the chemo session with you and fast forwarding yourself from beginning to end... *even to the period of time 24 hours AFTER the session!*  
It's easy to feel detached and relaxed as you move quickly through the whole experience!

So... now you can find it easy just to drift in to that place and notice the calm and relaxed fast-forward experience... giving you complete control, over how you feel and react to the chemo sessions.

*[some people even take a 'dummy' remote control into the session with them!]*

Now you have your remote control, you can even turn down the 'side-effects...' just like turning down the volume on a real remote control... dialling down any feelings of nausea at any time...any time you need to...

Now you can turn down the volume of all those negative parts of the treatment... comfortably changing all those old associations...

You can get used to treating the whole experience by fast-forwarding it... fast-forwarding the whole chemo session... and the time after it... from arriving in the hospital... to speeding through it... feeling totally relaxed and comfortable... and even fast-forwarding through the twenty four hours or so after the treatment... part of you outside the session as you speed through it... back into such a calm... restful... and peaceful place...

From now on, you can always have this power to use the remote control to turn down the volume at will...

# Appetite Loss

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## NOTES:

Most people who undergo chemotherapy find that their senses of taste and smell change considerably, often making it difficult for them to enjoy the foods they normally eat. The nausea and pain that chemo can cause may sometimes make it hard to feel like eating anything.

Eating smaller portions can help, as can taking moderate exercise like going for short walks before meals. Consuming foods dense in calories such as milkshakes or sweet foods like cakes are also useful in that they help combat weight loss.

There are also other strategies for dealing with appetite loss and everyone finds their own method that works for them. The good news is that within between two and six weeks of finishing chemotherapy, patient's appetites will normally return to normal.

This session will support patients through this period. Patients can use it while they are undergoing chemotherapy treatment to help better tolerate side effects and be more able to be better nourished during this time. They can also use it after the chemotherapy has finished as a way of preparing their minds to resume their appetites.

Hypnosis allows patients to work directly with their unconscious mind.

This session is not about pressurising patients to eat – pressurising patients to eat can result in unnecessary stress and tension about eating.

This session is about helping patients feel calmer and more relaxed about food as well as helping them to tune out and dial down any side effects of the chemo, so they can get the nutrition they need and look forward to having their appetites return to normal, and it is important that this happens at a rate that feels easy, natural, and comfortable.

## SCRIPT:

There will have been plenty of times in your life when your body was aware of its own strengths and was healthy.

You can remember one of those times right now... even a specific time or place, when you felt full of energy and vitality, when you were happy and healthy...

Think of a place that was special to you... maybe walking on the beach or in the forest, or even at grandma's house... remember the colours and sensations, the sights and the sounds, maybe the feeling of the sun on your shoulders... or the laughter of the people you were with...

Imagine looking out over a beautiful view... this might be somewhere you know well or it might be somewhere you'd like to visit or even a place in your imagination...

Imagine or visualise the expansive view... the landscape... the vegetation... drink in the colours, and notice the sounds, the smells, and even the temperature... sensing everything that's around you in this place... breathing in the fresh air... feeling the air on your face...

Now, think of a piece of music you really like... a piece of music that when you hear it, it makes you feel really good!

You can just allow that tune to come into your head, and listening to it will help you relax even deeper still...

Now remember how it felt the last time you were wrapped in a nice warm blanket... maybe curled up in bed on a Sunday morning, or curled up on the sofa watching TV or in front of a nice warm fire...

Feel the warmth of the blanket... the softness of the material... the cosiness of being so relaxed and *completely* safe...

Far away... barely visible on the horizon, are the things that have been bothering you.

The seem so far away now... and as you notice them, you also get a sense of how distant they are...

Again, you notice how relaxed you feel and how distant those things seem when you allow yourself to relax... how everything becomes more do-able... more manageable... one thing at a time... one step at a time...

Believe it... your unconscious mind is very good at tuning out what's not relevant – just like living near an airport - you only notice the planes coming in to land for the first few days, and then before you know it, you hardly notice them at all, because you unconsciously 'tune them out.'

Now you can just watch your problems on a screen... and tone down anxiety... but this time, not on a cinema screen... but on the screen on a mobile phone, where you have complete control over the brightness... complete control over the volume... and of course you can turn it off whenever you want...

But you can still view the future where you have more energy, more vitality and more determination!

As your appetite returns to normal... you will find yourself feeling better and better... every day... in every way... feeling better and better... feeling more energetic... more and more determined to succeed...

Now you can visualise yourself walking into the future... where everything is slowly returning to normal... where you feel more relaxed and more in control... a place where you begin to thrive once more... and become a better version of yourself...

# Fear of recurrence

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## NOTES:

The majority of those who survive cancer still have worries about relapsing. The American Cancer Society estimates that at least 70% of people who have had cancer will experience some degree of fear or anxiety about the future.

Some recovered patients feel they can no longer trust their bodies. Some find it hard to plan for the future, because everything feels less certain. Sometimes ordinary aches or pains can trigger anxiety of a relapse. Even the terminology doctors use, such as 'in remission' can imply that the respite might somehow be temporary. For some people, the phrase 'in remission' isn't helpful, whereas words like 'recovery' and 'survivor' are more encouraging.

However you think, the fact is, no one can offer a guarantee you will be healthy for the rest of your life in the same way no one can guarantee any of us a long life. But cancer patients have had a taste of what serious illness is really like and have a more finely tuned awareness of mortality than most other people, so it's understandable they feel anxious.

Cancer makes the future less certain, and can cause people to change their outlook on life, which in turn can involve some difficult feeling and emotions. Sometimes these manifest themselves as grief or anger for what they have lost, or a longing for peace of mind. But it can also wake them up and make them re-evaluate what's important in life.

Many cancer survivors approach life differently after their recovery, often making more time for family or doing things they love. So recovering from cancer can trigger a period of re-evaluating priorities.

Trying to force your mind to think only positive thoughts doesn't work, and research shows that trying to suppress worries and push them out of your mind only ends up making them worse.

This post-recovery session helps patients calm the emotions associated with worry, so that they no longer have the power they used to. Believe it or not, worrying is part of the human survival strategy. Ultimately your mind is only trying to protect you – or perhaps encourage you to think of a 'plan B'.

Looking after your health eating well, exercising, getting proper sleep, and limiting the amount of stress you're exposed to keeps your immune system strong and vibrant. But there will always be some uncertainty because there are very few things that are completely under your control. So rather than trying to convince patients they can be completely safe all of the time, this session is designed to help them relax and accept some uncertainty... and develop a balanced, optimistic attitude towards the future.

# SCRIPT:

Imagine now that you are looking down the road we started on at the beginning... It stretches far ahead into the distance... and in the far distance is a healing light...

So you can walk slowly and purposeful toward the light... leaving behind all the negative things... all the negative feelings and emotions...

Your immune system is the product of millions years of evolution... throughout countless generations... and has been honed to almost perfection. And then there's also the gift of modern medical science.

All those things work together to protect you from disease... clearing out bugs and repairing cells... even getting rid of cells that have outlived their usefulness...

All in all... your immune system works for you to keep you healthy...

Occasionally however, things don't always work as expected and the system can get out of balance... but your immune system can get things back under control fairly quickly...and everything comes back into balance... Your immune system is a powerful ally... it's strong and reliable... and it creates all the antibodies your body needs to survive...

You also have a powerful psychological immune system to help keep you in the best of health emotionally... maintaining your psychological and emotional well-being...

Maybe you once found yourself in a bad relationship and were hurt emotionally, or you might of lost someone who was very dear to you... or a time when you were worried about money... but now... after all this time... these things don't hurt so much now... because your emotional immune system kicked in and did its work...

Your emotional and psychological immune system healed you because it eventually flushed away the negative thoughts, feelings and emotions that were no longer important... Your mind *adapted* so you could move on with your life.

Now... your emotional and psychological immune system will encourage you to eat healthily... to sleep deeply... to enjoy relaxing... to live healthily... to eat a balanced diet...

Your emotional immune system will stop you worrying about the trivial things in life... it will also help you to put things in perspective...

It stops you thinking about the worst... be cause *the worst never happens!*

Instead, your emotional and logical immune system uses it's natural ability to use your energy where it will be more useful... promoting a strong and healthy lifestyle...

You know what it's like to turn the volume down on a music system so the music gets quieter and quieter so you can look after yourself... free from those old nagging doubts...

Now you can look forward to a new start in life... to new experiences... to new adventures... and to a calmer, laid back, worry free life... to a time of happiness and contentment... looking forward to a life more satisfying... more fulfilled...

You can listen to this session as often as you wish... and you will quickly get used to this new inner strength and this calm balanced optimism about the future...