

Hypnosis and Hypnotherapy FAQ

Hypnosis and hypnotherapy work by surfacing the root causes of our emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical distress or imbalance. The underlying principle of these therapies is that the subconscious mind contains rich information about our motivations and reactions to daily life. As a way of protecting ourselves, our conscious minds are highly adept at hiding this information through a variety of methods (e.g. belittle, divert, block, disrupt, disassociate, and confuse). These instinctual and habitual defense mechanisms are disarmed through the hypnosis process, for better insight, clarity, and integration between our subconscious and our conscious minds.

Unlike the conscious mind, the subconscious mind is not rational; it doesn't understand time; it speaks in metaphor, and can't distinguish between what is real and what is imagined. It is where we hold our memories, as well as the deep emotional energy associated with them.

Addressing, releasing, and healing these deep emotions and experiences can best be done by communicating with the part of ourselves where they originated and still reside. This is why hypnotherapy works as well (and as quickly) as it does.



Hypnosis is a state of mind in which suggestions are acted upon much more reliably than what's possible in a more fully conscious state of mind. Even though you're given suggestions, you're still in control. In fact, all hypnosis is self-hypnosis, because without your active intention and consent, these suggestions wouldn't be effective at all.

FAQs

What does hypnosis feel like?

Everyone's experience is different, and these experiences deepen over time and with practice. Many people find that hypnosis provides a sensation similar to other activities that involve deep relaxation and focus, such as meditation, yoga, Reiki, daydreaming, and even moments when you're just "spacing out". Some folks have rich visual experiences, like a daydream, and others experience receiving epiphanies, bodily sensations, or emotions, quickly and suddenly, yet unmistakably.

Have you ever "drifted off" during a repetitive task like paying your bills or flushing the toilet or watering your plants and wondered 'did I do that?' because you can't quite recall? What often happens during these moments is that your focus 'was somewhere else' and you weren't completely aware of what was happening in the moment... this is actually a kind of hypnosis.

What if nothing happens? What if I can't be hypnotized?

This is one of the most common questions; many people worry that they're the kind of person who simply can't be hypnotized. The truth is, if you've ever fallen asleep, you're capable of being hypnotized. That feeling in the moment just before drifting off to sleep is actually a kind of trance, or deeply relaxed state. It's also important to get clear about what your expectations are, and how you define "nothing". The more you remain open to whatever happens, the less likely you'll chalk up the experience to "nothing".

It's also a good idea to refrain from being overly critical about what you're experiencing since this will only disrupt the relaxation process.

Will I lose control or become a different person when I'm hypnotized?

No. If you ever feel uncomfortable about what's happening, you can open your eyes and 'wake up'. You may feel a bit different during the trance session than you do when you're fully alert, but you're still 'you'. In fact, the more relaxed you feel and the more open your imagination, the more free you'll feel to access the authentic you. Your hypnotherapist is there to help facilitate this self-discovery process, but you're always in control of the overall experience.

What if I suddenly remember something I wasn't aware of and it's traumatic?

This may happen. Being in a relaxed state may actually help ease the traumatic experience of the memory, and having your hypnotherapist fully support you each step of the way is essential. There are specific techniques to use for healing trauma (whether previously repressed or not). One of these is called the “rewind” technique where the client watches the experience as if it was on a movie screen, but has a remote control to rewind and fast-forward at will. In addition to empowering the client, it also helps reestablish new brain pathways that are associated with the trauma, so that the client can retain the memory while disarming any of its triggers.

Please note: Some hypnotherapeutic approaches – those that are very directive in nature - may increase the danger of creating false memories, in spite of a therapist’s intention. My recommendation is to work with a hypnotherapist who practices focused yet nondirective guidance - letting the client lead throughout the process, especially as these memories unfold. Part of this is to make sure the client is sufficiently resourced (e.g. higher self, power animals, spirit guides, etc.)

What if I’m only imagining things when I’m in the middle of a trance?

That’s exactly the point. Go with it. Your imagination could have come up with anything, and the fact that it chose what it did is significant. After all, activating our imaginations is a key aspect of the hypnotherapeutic process. Since imagination and memory reside in the same part of our brain, activating our creative imagination can often trigger our memory, bringing up aspects of our past that may be ripe for healing introspection, examination, integration and/or release.

What type of conditions can be treated with hypnotherapy?

Hypnotherapy surfaces the hidden connections between our emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual bodies, enabling us to overcome pain, anxiety, and other health challenges. Nearly any condition¹ or issue can be improved using the hypnotherapeutic process, including achieving positive outcomes such as enhancing athletic, academic, or professional performances (e.g. public speaking), preparing for and healing from surgeries, or improving overall health (controlling weight and/or diet, enhancing sleep, etc).

¹ Common conditions include: trauma, stress, anxiety, OCD, PTSD, depression, grief, weight control, insomnia, fears, phobias, and more. Issues involving childhood, personal, family, and professional relationships, and other personal challenges can all be facilitated by the enhanced self-awareness offered by self-hypnosis and hypnotherapy.

Consider this. Stress is a factor in five out of the six leading causes of death and an estimated 75 percent to 90 percent of all doctor visits are for stress-related issues². As a tool that safely cultivates deep relaxation for releasing stress and other negative emotions, hypnotherapy offers rich healing benefits across a spectrum of presenting issues.

What type of conditions cannot be treated with hypnotherapy?

Hypnotherapy would not be a recommended treatment for major psychiatric disorders like bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or other serious personality disorders (e.g. dissociative identity disorder).

What if I'm also seeing a psychotherapist? Do these approaches conflict?

Not at all. In fact, hypnotherapy is considered an effective aid to traditional psychotherapy. Many certified clinical hypnotherapists (CCHTs) also hold MFT and/or PsyD licenses. They find that adding hypnotherapy and other energy therapy modalities to their psychotherapy practice can help accelerate their clients' healing process through deeper self-awareness.

What if I don't believe in God or am not 'spiritual' or religious in any way? Will this still work?

A belief in God (or whatever term resonates with you) is not a prerequisite for transpersonal or spiritual hypnotherapeutic approaches to work. That said, having a deep belief in your ability to transform yourself **is** required. When working with atheists or other folks who don't have deep spiritual anchors to rely on (e.g. angels, spirit guides, etc.), resources like gut instinct, the inner wise self, the conscience, 'the future you' or other aspects of self are viable stand-ins.

The point is to have the necessary resources and support system so you have the strength to integrate discoveries and achieve the transformation you're seeking. Mother Nature is a powerful resource, along with power animals, pets, crystals, and other gifts and tools we can call on during a trance.

How do I know that the 'voice' I hear or messages I receive are ones I can safely rely on?

² Source: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/stress-and-health_b_3313606

It is true that trusting your gut instinct is a practiced skill. With all the noise in our daily lives, it can be difficult to discern and tune into our own gut instinct. That said, the voice of ego and the voice of spirit do have distinct characteristics.

Here's a useful chart as a guideline.

The Voice of Ego
(The 'Personality')

Flatters
Commands
Demands
Tests
Chooses for you
Imprisons
Inspires Dependency
Intrudes
Pushes
Excludes

The Voice of Spirit
(The 'Soul')

Informs
Suggests
Guides
Nudges
Leaves Choice to You
Empowers
Inspires Independence
Respects
Supports
Includes

Next Steps

Tuning into our innermost selves can reap tremendous benefits for our mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual bodies. Understanding ourselves better offers inner strength and resilience – while also requiring us to summon our courage to do the work to achieve these results.

Take a few moments to determine how you'd like to continue your journey. What are your goals for self-hypnosis (and self-care in general)? Which tools feel right for you – self-hypnosis, guided meditation, hypnotherapy, etc. How will you use the information you gained (and experiences you had) to inform where you go next? In the meantime, keep seeking, and stay tuned.

References:

Top 5 Myths About Hypnosis

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Sensory Experiences in Hypnotherapy

<https://www.staytunedenergyhealing.com/blog/sensory-experiences-in-energy-healing-and-hypnotherapy>

Hypnotherapy Glossary

<https://hypnosis.edu/glossary/a>

Hypnotherapy Training (HCH Institute)

<https://www.hypnotherapytraining.com>