

Self-Hypnosis Handbook

Ray Sullivan, PhD

Hypnosis for Health and Wellbeing

Ray Sullivan, PhD
(805) 637- 4263
raysullivanventurahypnotherapy.com

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Introduction

In this section I describe four techniques to induce a self hypnotic trance: three basic techniques and an advance technique. You must first master at least one of the basic techniques before you attempt the fourth advanced technique.

When you practice self-hypnosis, approach the practice with a sense of reverence. The face you turn towards Psyche is the face he/she will turn towards you, so approach Psyche, the unconscious, with a sense of awe. Some people liken hypnosis to computer programming, but I prefer to think of it in terms of collaboration and partnership, a similar attitude that I may hold towards a friend. I would not be so presumptuous as to think of “programming” my friend, but I can and should expect cooperation and teamwork from a good friend. So when you approach the unconscious, do so with a friendly positive attitude.

Practice self-hypnosis in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Lower the lights and draw the curtains. You want to eliminate any and all distractions as much as possible. If you like, put on some soft soothing music. I prefer some droning, wavy new age instrumental type music because it does engage my mind like rock, blues or jazz music does. These types of music force themselves upon our consciousness which is okay is certain occasions, but not for self-hypnosis. If you are going to listen to music while practicing, find music that invites. I recommend that you only listen to instrumental music whiling practicing because language, even lyrical, engages the conscious mind; our desire is to relax and disengage the conscious mind and that means if you are a musician, choose music that you would not normally play.

When you practice make yourself as comfortable as possible, either by sitting on a very relaxing chair with your hands gently in your lap and your feet flatly on the floor or you lie on a very comfortable bed.

Notice how I use the work “practice.” Self-hypnosis is a practice, it very similar to meditation in two important aspects. First, it is a practice, so if you are a beginner, be patient. You did not learn to walk with your first attempt. First, you pull yourself up and try to balance, but you inevitably fall, sometimes immediately, but you try again. Soon you take your first hesitant steps and of course, you topple over, but you keep trying so that walking becomes natural and unconscious. Anyone who observes a baby learning to walk knows this. Self-hypnosis is like this, the more you practice, the quicker and deeper you will go into a trance.

Self-hypnosis is similar to meditation in another important aspect. In some mediation techniques, the practitioner has an object of meditation such as a mantra or the feeling of love and compassion. When their concentration wanders from their object, they gently bring their focus and attention back to the object. In self-hypnosis your object is a suggestion or affirmation, a keyword associated with a set of suggestions, or an

image of your future self with newly acquired skills and behaviors. I will discuss this in detail later in this handbook, for now suffice it say that in self-hypnosis you do not want to go into a complete somnambulistic or unconscious state.

So now, let us turn our attention to the some self-hypnosis induction techniques.

Self-hypnosis Induction Techniques

Progressive Relaxation

Start the progressive relaxation technique by sitting in a comfortable chair with both feet firmly on the ground and hands gently lying in lap. Alternatively, you may lie on a relaxing bed with legs uncrossed and arms tenderly to your side.

Gently close your eyes. Take a deep breath in and hold it for the count of three. I like to count three heartbeats. Then as you exhale silently repeat silently to yourself "Sleep Now." Sleep now is simply a cue to condition yourself so that each time you practice will enter a deep state of relaxation quicker. It does not mean the deep sleep of night.

Take second deep breath, hold it gently for the count of three, and again as you exhale silently repeat to yourself "Sleep Now."

Now take a third deep breath, hold it for the count of three and as you exhale again repeat to yourself "Sleep Now."

Keep your body as still as possible until you are finished with this exercise and ready to count yourself out of hypnosis.

Imagine a light of relaxation entering through the crown of your head. When I use the word imagine, I mean to sense and feel as if the light is actually entering through the crown of your head. The light maybe any color you like and may change from one practice session to the next. Next, you will imagine the light moving slowly and gently through your entire body.

Start by allowing the light to fill your entire head. Imagine sense and feel the muscles in your head becoming loose and limp. If you have strong visual representations, visualize the muscles around your eyes as if they are loose rubber bands. Otherwise, give yourself a gentle and silent suggestion to relax those muscles. Feel and sense the muscles relaxing.

Allow the light to melt into your neck. Notice how the feelings of relaxation follow your attention. Allow all the muscles in your neck to become loose and relaxed. Simply allow it to happen and it will.

Slowly move the light into your shoulders, then down your arms, into your elbows, forearms, wrists, into your hands and then out your fingers.

At this point I like to imagine that I feel energy flowing through my body starting from the crown of my head, through my head, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, and out my fingers.

Next, allow the light to melt into your back. Slowly move it down your spine one vertebrae at a time. As you let it run down your spine, relax every muscle in your back. Gradually move the light into chest area, then leisurely into your abdomen noticing how every muscle relaxes as you do.

Permit the light to flow into pelvis area, then down into your thighs, knees. Focus the light into your shins, into your ankles, heels, into the soles of your feet and then out your toes.

At this point I imagine I feel energy flowing through my entire body starting from the crown of my head, through my head, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, and out my fingers, then down my back and through my chest and abdomen, down through my pelvis and into my legs, down in feet and out my toes. I like to imagine this energy as soothing, healing, relaxing light.

Visualize your entire body bathed, engulfed, and filled with relaxing light. Even imagine your body made from this healing, soothing, relaxing light. Notice how this experience feels in your body. Take note of it and remember it so you can recall it next time you practice.

Pay special attention to the sensations of relaxation. These sensations and feeling are unique to you. Notice the rate and depth of your breath. Pay attention to the "cues" which indicate that you are in a state of deep relaxation.

Remember this feeling. How does it feel to you to be completely deeply relaxed? With the raised finger technique, you will learn how to recall these feelings instantly anytime you want.

Enjoy this feeling of deep relaxation for as long as you like. If you are doing this practice at night, suggest to yourself that you fall into a deep and relaxing sleep, sleeping peacefully until the time you want to wake, waking feeling refreshed and energized.

One method of deepening your experience is to count silently down from seven to one your exhalations. Always count the exhalations and notice how your body naturally sinks down and relaxes as you exhale

If you are doing this practice during the day, when you are ready, count yourself out. To do this, simply and slowly count slowly from one to five, as you do so give yourself suggestions to return to your full awareness, fully awake and slowly begin to

move your fingers and toes. When you reach the number five, take a deep breath, and as you exhale gently open your eyes.

Active relaxation

Start the active relaxation technique as you would the progressive technique. Sit in a comfortable chair with both feet firmly on the ground and hands gently lying in lap. Alternatively, you may lie on a relaxing bed with legs uncrossed and arms tenderly to your side.

Gently close your eyes. Take a deep breath in and hold it for the count of three. I like to count three heartbeats. Then as you exhale silently repeat silently to yourself "Sleep Now." Remember, sleep now is simply a cue to condition yourself so that each time you practice will enter a deep state of relaxation quicker. It does not mean the deep sleep of night.

Take second deep breath, hold it gently for the count of three, and again as you exhale silently repeat to yourself "Sleep Now."

Now take a third deep breath, hold it for the count of three and as you exhale again repeat to yourself "Sleep Now."

Keep your body as still as possible until you are finished with this exercise and ready to count yourself out of hypnosis.

With this technique, you start with your toes. Focus your attention on the toes of both feet. Tighten the muscles of your toes but not too tightly. Count slowly to ten. When you reach ten, relax your toes. As you do this, imagine all the tension flowing out your toes.

Next, contract the muscles of your legs but again, not too tight. Slowly count up ten. When you reach ten, relax your legs. As you do this, imagine all the tension flowing out your legs.

Now move to the muscles in your abdomen. Tighten them, count slowly to ten and then relax them and as you imagine the all the tension flowing out your abdomen.

Repeat this process with the remaining major muscles groups of your body in the following order; chest, back, arm, neck and finally the head and face. Each time you relax your muscles, feel the tension flowing out of your body; you may imagine or visualize that you pour the tension out like water.

When you finish relaxing the muscles in your face, pay special attention to the sensations of relaxation. These sensations and feelings are unique to you. Notice the rate and depth of your breath. Pay attention to the physical "cues" which indicate that you are in a state of deep relaxation.

Remember this feeling. How does it feel to you to be completely and deeply relaxed? With the raised finger technique, you will learn how to recall these feelings anytime you want.

Enjoy this feeling of deep relaxation for as long as you like. If you are doing this practice at night, suggest to yourself that you fall into a deep and relaxing sleep, sleeping peacefully until the time you want to wake, waking feeling refreshed and energized.

One method of deepening your experience is to count silently down from seven to one on your exhalations. Always count the exhalations and notice how your body naturally sinks down and relaxes as you exhale.

If you are doing this practice during the day, when you are ready, count yourself out. To do this, simply and slowly count slowly from one to five, as you do so give yourself suggestions to return to your full awareness, fully awake and slowly begin to move your fingers and toes. When you reach the number five, take a deep breath, and as you exhale gently open your eyes.

Pendulum

This technique requires some type of pendulum.

Start the pendulum technique by sitting in a comfortable chair with both feet firmly on the ground.

Hold the pendulum directly in front of you between the first finger and thumb.

Now without conscious effort, cause the pendulum to swing back and forth from the left and right. Then without conscious effort, change the direction so that the pendulum swings back and forth from front to back. Finally, again without conscious effort, cause the pendulum to swing in a circle.

Now cause the pendulum to swing back and forth from the left and right again stare directly at the pendulum and notice which becomes heavy or tired first, your arms or your eyes.

If it is your arm, exaggerate the feeling of your arm becoming heavier and heavier. Keep your eyes on the pendulum and allow your arm to become heavier and heavier. Exaggerate the feeling of your being pulled down into your lap. When your arm finally falls into your lap, let your eyes close and allow yourself to fall into a pleasant state of deep relaxation.

If your eyes become heavy first, exaggerate the heaviness in your eyes. Keep your eyes on the pendulum and allow your eyes to become heavier and heavier. Exaggerate the feeling of your eye being pulled down. Notice how much they simply and naturally desire to close. When your eyes finally close, let your arm gently fall

into your lap. As you do, allow yourself to fall into a pleasant state of deep relaxation.

As always, pay special attention to your sensations of relaxation. These sensations and feelings are unique to you. Notice the rate and depth of your breath. Pay attention to the physical “cues” which indicate that you are in a state of deep relaxation.

Remember this feeling. How does it feel to you to be completely deeply relaxed? With the raised finger technique, you will learn how to recall these feelings anytime you want.

One method of deepening your experience is to count silently down from seven to one your exhalations. Always count the exhalations and notice how your body naturally sinks down and relaxes as you exhale.

Enjoy this feeling of deep relaxation for as long as you like, when you are ready, count yourself out. To do this, simply and slowly count slowly from one to five, as you do so give yourself suggestions to return to your full awareness, fully awake and slowly begin to move your fingers and toes. When you reach the number five, take a deep breath, and as you exhale gently open your eyes. I typically do not use this method while I am falling asleep.

Raised finger

This is an advanced technique so you must first master one of the three basic techniques before attempting this technique. In this technique, you learn how to go instantaneously into a state of deep relaxation. The more you practice this technique, the better you will become at it.

Begin this practice by entering into a state of deep relaxation using the progressive relaxation, active relaxation, or pendulum technique previously described. Once you have entered a state of deep relaxation, notice how the experience is for you. These sensations and feelings are unique to you. Notice the rate and depth of your breath. Pay attention to the physical “cues” which indicate that you are in a state of deep relaxation. During the raised finger technique, you simply recall and remember these feelings and sensations.

Start the actual practice as you would the progressive or active technique. Sit in a comfortable chair with both feet firmly on the ground and hands gently lying in lap. Alternatively, you may lie on a relaxing bed with legs uncrossed and arms tenderly to your side.

Now raise the index finger of either your right or left hand. It does not matter, whichever hand seems most comfortable for you. However, always use the same hand in subsequent practices. After you raise your index finger, allow it to gently fall and as you do repeat silently to yourself “Sleep Now.”

Repeat this process five times. Raise your index finger and then allow it gently fall and as you do silently repeat to yourself "Sleep Now." Deepen your experience of relaxation by actively recalling and remembering the sensations and feelings associated with a state of deep and complete relaxation.

When you are ready, count yourself out of hypnosis.

After you have opened your eyes, immediately continue your practice by raising your index finger and allowing it to fall once more. As you gently close your eyes and repeat yourself "Sleep Now." Notice how you re-enter that state of deep relaxation. See how far deep into that feeling of relaxation you can go.

One method of deepening your experience is to count silently down from seven to one your exhalations. Always count the exhalations and notice how your body naturally sinks down and relaxes as you exhale

Enjoy the feeling of deep relaxation for as long as you like, when you are ready, count yourself out. To do this, simply and slowly count slowly from one to five, as you do so give yourself suggestions to return to your full awareness, fully awake and slowly begin to move your fingers and toes. When you reach the number five, take a deep breath, and as you exhale gently open your eyes.

Remember the more you practice this technique the better you will become at it.

How to Structure Suggestions

1. State Your Clear and Strong Motivation

- List out the reasons you want the suggestion to be accepted by your subconscious.
- Do your best to identify the emotional counterweights which will tip the balance of your current behavior towards change.
- Begin your suggestion by stating your motivating desire.
 - Because I want to
 - For example; because I want to feel physically fit, healthy, energetic and vibrant, I ...

2. Be Positive

- Try your best not to mention the negative behavior, thought or attitude that you are working to replace.
- Instead, repeat and reinforce positive behaviors, thoughts, or attitudes that you are substituting for your old ways. Find and articulate the positive alternative behaviors, thoughts, or attitudes.
- Remember what you expect tends to be realized.

3. Always Use Present Tense

- This may seem strange to your rational mind, but always use present tense, even when constructing suggestions regarding your future behavior.
- Rather than saying, "tomorrow I will feel good," phrase your suggestion such that it reads; "tomorrow I feel good."
- When you repeat your suggestions imagine them manifesting in the present. Remember, when you use your imagination you are communicating with your subconscious.
- See yourself as having already accomplished your goal. Imagine what you are suggesting is true, not something off in the future.
- You tend to achieve what you believe.

4. Set a Time Limit

- Although you state your suggestions in the present tense, your conscious mind knows you cannot achieve most things instantaneously.
- Get a realistic timeframe or feel for how long it will take you to achieve your goal.

- Use words such as; very soon, tomorrow, next week, on Tuesday etc.
- Use phrases such as; more and more now, day by day, from this day forward, etc.

5. Suggest Action, not Ability

- Rather than writing; “I have the ability to _____,” Formulate the suggestion to read; “I _____” or “I am _____ing.

6. Be Specific

- Work with a small group of suggestions targeted at a very specific issue, theme or area of your life.
- Continue to work with those suggestions until you realize some results. I typically ask my clients to work with a set of suggestions for at least 30 consecutive days.
- While initially practicing self-hypnosis, work with one or two focused suggestions.
- Start with suggestions that are easy to carry out, so you can build a positive record of accomplishment with self-hypnosis.

7. Keep Your Language Simple

- Use the language of a bright ten year old.
- Use your native language.

8. Exaggerate and Emotionalize

- Powerful and exciting words influence the subconscious.
- Pick out strong descriptive adjectives such as wonderful, beautiful, exciting, great, thrilling, joyous, gorgeous, tremendous, excellent, etc.
- When you say or think your suggestion, do it with emotional intensity.

9. Use Repetition

- Repeat, enlarge, and expand upon your suggestions.
- Repeat your suggestions using different words and phrasing.
- The more often you hear or repeat a suggestion, the more likely you will act upon it

10. Use Multiple Voices

- Try constructing your suggestion using different voicings: first, second and even third person.
- For example; I am ____ *versus* You are ____ *versus* Ray is ____
- Get a sense of which voice works best for you and the specific phrasing you are using for your suggestion.

Directions for Practicing Self-Hypnosis

Mantra Method

Start by writing out your suggestion using the guidelines given above. Choose a description phrase, image, or symbol that best represents your suggestions. For example, if you are working on public speaking you might think of the phrase “Relaxed Speaker” to describe how you want to be in front of an audience. This descriptive phrase becomes your post-hypnotic trigger, which you consciously repeat to yourself.

Once you have finished writing out your suggestions, read them through thoroughly three times followed by your descriptive phrase. To start, work with a few suggestions targeted at a very specific behavior that is relatively free of emotional weight; something that seems relative easy to change and which you have direct control over.

Enter a relaxed state using your favorite method, which I described previously. When you recognize you have entered a trance state and before you allow your mind to wander off completely, start repeating silently to yourself your descriptive phrase, repeat it like a mantra. Alternatively, if you are working with a symbol or image recall that image as vividly as you can. If you are practicing at night, you allow yourself to simply fall into a deep peaceful sleep.

However, if you are practicing during the day, set a predetermined amount of time for your practice, for example twenty minuets. When you sense the time has passed, count up from one to five. It is important that as you do this you give yourself suggestions to return to your full alertness, fully awaken, full of life and energy, etc.

Use your descriptive phrase as a post-hypnotic trigger. When you find yourself in a situation or environment, where you wish or need to practice your new suggested behaviors, simply repeat silently to yourself your descriptive phrase. This will help you recall consciously your suggestions and motivate you to engage in new positive behaviors and choices.

Contemplation Method

Start by writing out your suggestion using the guidelines give above. Choose a description phrase, an image, or symbol that best represents your suggestions. For example, if you are working on public speaking you might think of the phrase “Relaxed Speaker” to describe how you want to be in front of an audience. This descriptive phrase becomes your post-hypnotic trigger.

Once you have finished writing out your suggestions, choose one or two that you will contemplate. You will want to memorize the suggestions.

Enter a relaxed state using your favorite method, which I described previously. When you recognize you have entered a trance state, do not let your analytical mind wander off. With this method, you want to harness the power of your analytical mind.

Start to contemplate why your suggestions are true. For example, let us say that you are working on becoming a confident public speaker. Your suggestion might read, "When I speak in public I am calm and confident." When you contemplate this suggestion, you may follow lines of reasoning such as; I am calm and confident because I deserve to have my voice heard, what I have to say is important, I am benefiting others by sharing my views, etc. Contemplate the reason why your suggestion is true. If you find your mind wandering, gently come back to your original suggestion. If you use this method, it is very important that you develop an attitude of kindness and patience with yourself. Inevitably, your mind may wander, when you notice this, gently bring your thoughts back to your original suggestion. That is why it important you memorize your original suggestion.

If you are practicing at night, you can allow yourself to simply fall into a deep peaceful sleep by repeating your key phrase as described above. Or if you are working with a symbol or an image, visualize that image for as long as you can while you fall peacefully asleep.

However, if you are practicing during the day, set a predetermined amount of time for your practice, for example twenty minutes. When you sense the time has passed, count up from one to five. It is important that as you do this you give yourself suggestions to return to your full alertness, fully awaken, full of life and energy, etc.

Remember to use your descriptive phrase as a post-hypnotic trigger. When you find yourself in a situation or environment where you wish or need to practice your new suggested behaviors, repeat silently to yourself your descriptive phrase. This will help you recall consciously your suggestions and motivate you to engage in new positive behavior and choices.

Bringing the Future into the Present Method

In this method, you start by describing your future goal. It is best to start this practice by writing out a narrative. For example, if you are working on losing weight, write a narrative of having achieved your goal weight.

I am at my goal weight of 135lbs. I feel great and my clothes fit me so perfectly. I even feel thinner. All my friends say I look great and contemplate me on figure. I am live consciously and eat healthy nutritious food that I love. I really enjoy going to the gym and working my body. etc.

Find a symbol, an image, or a phrase that best describes your new life.

Enter a relaxed state using your favorite method, which I described previously. When you recognize you have entered a trance state, you harness your imaginal mind. Start to visualize your self actually living the narrative that you just wrote. Engage all of your sense and make the experience are real and vivid as possible. Activate your feelings and get a sense of what it feels like to have achieved your goal. Then think about all the strengths, resources, and skills you utilized to achieve. Be as specific as possible

when you identify those strengths and resources. If possible, identify the actually behavior you engage to achieve your goal, or you may simply trust your unconscious mind to guide you to the necessary behaviors.

If you are practicing at night, you may allow yourself to simply fall into a deep peaceful sleep by repeating your key phrase as previously described. On the other hand, if you are working with a symbol or an image, visualize that image for as long as you can while you fall peacefully asleep.

However, if you are practicing during the day, set a predetermined amount of time for your practice, for example twenty minutes. When you sense the time has passed, count up from one to five. It is important that as you do this you give yourself suggestions to return to your full alertness, fully awaken, full of life and energy, etc.

As always, use your descriptive phrase as a post-hypnotic trigger. When you find yourself in a situation or environment, where you wish or need to practice your new suggested behaviors, simply repeat silently to yourself your descriptive phrase. This will help you recall consciously your suggestions and motivate you to engage in new positive behavior and choices.