

## What Can Hypnosis Be Used For?

Hypnosis has been shown to be effective in helping people with a wide variety of conditions including (but not limited to):

Pain  
Dental and Medical Procedures  
Post-Surgical Recovery  
Nausea and Vomiting  
Anxiety and Phobias  
Depression  
Stress  
Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms  
Dissociative Disorders  
Smoking Cessation  
Weight Management  
Habit Disorders  
Asthma  
Gastrointestinal Disorders (e.g., IBS)  
Hemophilia  
Skin Conditions  
Childbirth



Division 30

Society of Psychological Hypnosis

*If you would like more information about hypnosis, below is a list of professional organizations you can contact:*

APA Division 30, Society of Psychological Hypnosis  
<http://www.apa.org/divisions/div30/>

The Executive Committee of the American Psychological Association, Division of Psychological Hypnosis promotes professional education and the exchange of scientific information and develops standards of care.

Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis (SCEH),  
Executive Office  
<http://www.sceh.us/>

Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology  
221 Rivermoor Street, Boston, MA 02132  
Tel: 617-469-1981  
Fax 617-469-1889  
email: [sceh@mspp.edu](mailto:sceh@mspp.edu)

## HYPNOSIS:



WHAT IT IS  
AND  
HOW IT CAN  
HELP YOU FEEL  
BETTER

**APA Division 30, Society of  
Psychological Hypnosis©**

# What is Hypnosis?

The purpose of this brochure is to introduce you to hypnosis - what it is and how it can be used to help you to feel better. After reading this brochure, you can discuss with your therapist how hypnosis can be used specifically for you; how it can be used to help improve your emotional and physical well-being.

Hypnosis involves learning how to use your mind and thoughts in order to manage emotional distress (e.g., anxiety, stress), unpleasant physical symptoms (e.g., pain, nausea), or to help you change certain habits or behaviors (e.g., smoking, overeating). Although hypnosis sessions may differ depending on a particular client's needs, sessions typically have two basic phases:

- The first phase is called an induction. During this phase, your therapist may help you to relax, may ask you to imagine a peaceful scene and will help you to become more focused and concentrated on what you need to accomplish during your hypnosis session.
- The second phase is called an application phase. During this phase, your therapist will make *suggestions* to you. For example, if you are experiencing anxiety, your therapist may suggest that during and/or following hypnosis, you will be calmer or less bothered by feelings of anxiety. If you are experiencing pain, your therapist may suggest that following hypnosis, you will no longer experience pain, or that you will be better able to manage any pain you do experience. The suggestions are the key ingredients of hypnosis because they are targeted to treat your specific symptoms or difficulties.

Many people have concerns or worries about hypnosis based on misconceptions they have. These misconceptions may be based on things they might have seen on TV, in the movies, or in stage shows. Listed below are some common misconceptions, and the actual facts about hypnosis

**Misconception 1:** The person being hypnotized will be under the control of the hypnotist, and can be made to do or say anything the hypnotist wants.

**Fact 1: This is not true.** No matter how deeply hypnotized you become, you will remain in control throughout the session. You cannot be made to do anything you do not want to do, or anything that you are uncomfortable doing.

**Misconception 2:** Hypnosis is something that is done to people, rather than something that they can do for themselves.

**Fact 2: This is not true.** Hypnosis is a skill you can learn. It is a tool you can use to help yourself feel better.

**Misconception 3:** People become trapped in hypnosis and cannot "come out" of it when they want to.

**Fact 3: This is not true.** People can end hypnosis whenever they want.

**Misconception 4:** People have to be very "hypnotizable" or "suggestible" or "gullible" for hypnosis to work.

**Fact 4: This is not true.** Research has indicated that the vast majority of people can benefit from hypnosis. Furthermore, being hypnotizable or choosing to be responsive to suggestions means only that you have the ability to use hypnosis effectively. It is not at all related to being gullible or weak-willed.

**Misconception 5:** During hypnosis, people are unconscious.

**Fact 5:** This is not true. During hypnosis, people are not asleep or unconscious. Although they may feel very relaxed, they are active participants in the hypnosis session.

## Is hypnosis therapy?

Hypnosis is **not** a type of psychotherapy. Instead, it is a technique that can be used, and that can be taught to you, in the context of other therapies.

## Who should perform hypnosis?

Clinical hypnosis should be conducted **only** by properly trained and credentialed health care professionals (e.g., licensed psychologists) who have been specifically trained in the use of hypnosis, and who are working within the limits of their professional expertise.

## What kind of results can I expect from hypnosis?

Hypnosis has been demonstrated to have a wide range of benefits, from simply improving symptoms or difficulties, to completely eliminating them.

## How can I expect to feel during hypnosis?

Most people describe hypnosis as a pleasant experience, during which they feel focused and absorbed in the hypnotic experience. Depending on how you and your therapist agree to structure your hypnosis sessions, they may help you to feel more alert, more relaxed, more comfortable, or more peaceful.