



## Using Self-Hypnosis (Focused Relaxation) to create a Meditative State Instructions

In my experience Self-Hypnosis and Meditation achieve both a very similar state of awareness and psychological health benefits, if practiced on a regular basis, at least once/twice per week for typically 15-30 minutes. Guided hypnosis or guided meditation, where a persons voice guides you through a story/journey/experience in your minds-eye/imagination, is also extremely helpful and therapeutic and there are a number of free and subscription Apps on the internet that now provide a range of guided sessions to listen to. However a Self-Hypnosis/Meditative session often allows for a more personal, connected and reflective experience.

Learning how to place yourself into a nice, relaxed, self-hypnotic state/meditative state, where your body feels as relaxed as it does when you sleep, but you are otherwise conscious (mind awake, body asleep), is a very easy procedure to follow and enables you to significantly benefit, both mentally and physically, reducing feelings of stress and anxiety, allowing you to feel more comfortable and connected within yourself, whilst also allowing you to tap into an intuitive and creative inner resource that we all have. You can do this at any time of your choosing for a few minutes, or for as long as you like, but it will probably take you 5-15 minutes to achieve that 'body asleep' (all muscles completely relaxed) sensation. Like most disciplines in life, the more you practice, the easier it becomes.

There is nothing complicated about self-hypnosis, it is just 'focused relaxation'. If you happen to have been hypnotised by a hypnotherapist, you'll know that they simply guide you into a relaxed state by focusing your attention (your thoughts and pictures in your minds-eye) on a number of relaxing thoughts.

### **Self-Hypnosis (Focused Relaxation) Procedure :**

1. Sit yourself down in a suitable chair that allows you to be relaxed and comfortably, maybe with support for your arms and the back of your head. A sofa is a good choice. You may find a cushion placed behind your back allows a better posture. Lying down is typically not a good position, as this WILL often bring on actual 'sleep' if you're tired, this being your normal position for sleep. Keep your legs uncrossed and hands comfortably resting in your lap, at the sides of your thighs or on the arms of the chair, whichever you prefer. Ensure you feel warm enough, as your temperature will drop as you relax and that you will not be disturbed if possible. Switch any phones to silent and if you choose, everyday background sounds can be quietened by using inner ear buds/headphones etc. An eye mask may also be used but like the ear buds, is not absolutely necessary, just a personal option.
2. Close your eyes... take a slow, deep 'belly' breath in as you inhale (3-4sec)...hold it for 2-3 seconds and slowly exhale making an 'O' with your mouth, imagining you're blowing the flame of a candle to make it flicker... and repeat for 7-10 times, nice and slowly. And now just relax and focus on breathing nice and easily, a nice relaxed slow breathing pattern. And as you breath out slowly, tune into that sensation of calm relaxation of slowing down, flowing throughout your entire body, whilst you continue to focus on your breathing.
3. And with your eyes closed just continue a nice slow breathing pattern, breathing through your nose or your mouth, which ever is more comfortable for you... feeling yourself slowing down whilst focusing your attention on simply relaxing... every bone...every muscle...every fibre in your body... Repeat to yourself in the quietness of your mind... "Feeling Relaxed and Calm... Quiet and Still" And just undertake a mental sweep around all your major body parts (Neck, Back, Shoulders, Arms, Hands, Legs, Feet) ensuring they're supported, they're comfortable, they're relaxed with no tension, no discomfort in any of your body parts whatsoever. Just reposition any part or stretch that muscle to ease out any tension, allowing yourself to be as relaxed and as comfortable as you can possibly be.

4. If you find your mind wandering back to day to day conscious thoughts, immediately go back to focus on your breathing... Breathing nice and slowly and evenly.
  - a. And now as you breath in, count “one” in your mind... As you exhale nice and slowly say “and’ in your mind. On the next breath in count ‘two’ for the inhale... then “and” for the exhale... repeat up to ‘four’ ... “and”. Now repeat the whole sequence another couple of times, so a total count of 12 breaths.
  - b. Now simply replace the first sequence with “Relaxed and Calm” on the Inhale... “Quiet and Still” on the exhale. Again repeat silently in your mind for a total of 8-12 breaths, nice and slow.
5. Again, if you become consciously aware of your mind wandering, bring your attention back to your breathing and start the Counting or your “Relaxed and Calm...” mantra again. If you suddenly become conscious/aware that you have started dreaming i.e. the start of a fragment of a nonsensical story/thought process... then you may find that you are actually too tired to avoid falling asleep. In which case it would be best to sleep and rest first, then when refreshed, come back to your Self Hypnosis/Meditation session and start from scratch.
6. Assuming you have been able to follow the sequences to relax your mind and body, you will sense an awareness of yourself and a quiet stillness. You will be able to sense that your body feels almost as one, as it does when you are actually asleep, but that your mind is indeed conscious and awake. But you will also notice that all the exhausting chitter-chatter of your conscious mind/thoughts has stopped and you feel a quiet peacefulness. If you suffer from any sort of Tinnitus (Ringing in the ear) you will find that this almost certainly becomes much quieter, often even silent.
7. In this very relaxed, quiet peaceful state, there are many things you might choose to do that will benefit you considerably.
  - a. Simply continue to relax and enjoy a feeling of peace, stillness, quietness and tranquillity, of being connected to your true self and aware of yourself and your quiet thoughts. A feeling of wellbeing or rejuvenation that focused relaxation (self-hypnosis) can bring.or
  - b. You could focus your thoughts in your minds-eye/your imagination, to somewhere where you would love to relax... a favourite place: a Beach, a Mountainside, a Forest, a Garden, or a Room in the quietness of your own mind etc... And then simply ‘see’ yourself in that place and then ‘be’ yourself looking out through your eyes as you rest in your chosen place of relaxation.or
  - c. Talk to yourself in the absolute quietness of your own mind, as if talking to the very best friend you could ever have. Ask them what’s going on? How do they feel about things? Anything you choose. You’ll be amazed how this honesty with yourself in the quietness of your own mind will help you in your normal conscious day to day life.or
  - d. Help yourself to resolve a problem/issue. Simply focus your thoughts or just ponder on a subject, or topic, or problem that you might have. Just explore all aspects as if talking the problem through with a close friend. With your conscious mind deeply relaxed you will be surprised what intuitive thoughts or ideas or solutions may come to you.
8. And when you’re ready to return to your normal waking state (mind awake, body awake) keeping your eyes closed, simply acknowledge to yourself that it’s time to go... and start to bring your consciousness to an awareness of your body. Twiddle your fingers, twiddle your toes gently. Remind yourself that when you open your eyes you will feel deeply rested but very quickly feel wide awake and very alert... and then when you feel ready, simply open your eyes.