Self-Hypnosis and Deep Relaxation

This short article is to help you achieve a deeper level of relaxation with some simple exercises which may be done daily. Many of our problems in life are directly related to stress and tension which we experience in our day to day lives and which sometimes prevents us from experiencing the quality of life and relationships we could enjoy. This exercise should ideally be done first thing in the morning upon arising.

1. **1-minute meditation:** When you first open your eyes in the morning or just before you go to sleep, just touch your thumb to your peaceful place finger and spend a few moments connecting to your place of peace. Imagine sights, sounds and feelings which are peaceful, serene and relaxing (try and use all your senses). Just spend as much time as you think you need to each morning or evening. Then finish by taking a deep breath and thinking the word "relax" as you breathe out.

You may touch your thumb to your peaceful place finger whenever you need to during the day or take a deep breath and relax to reconnect with that deep inner peace you felt during hypnosis. The following technique will help us to relax even more deeply:

2. **The Daily practice of Stillness Meditation:**

Find a comfortable posture either lying down on your bedroom floor, sitting cross-legged on the floor with a cushion underneath (if this is something you can easily manage) or sitting in a straight-backed chair. Ensure you will not be disturbed for 10mins or so.

All you need to cultivate in this style of meditation is **Stillness** and **Relaxation**-it's all about letting go and just experiencing the deep relaxation and stillness within. If you find it helpful you may imagine yourself to be in a place of peace and serenity while you're doing this exercise.

You can start by touching your thumbs to your peaceful place finger and then taking one slow deep breath allowing your whole body to relax as you exhale, letting go of all your tension, stress and anxiety.

Imagine that you are in a very peaceful place in nature. Try and experience the beauty of this place with all of your senses. Then imagine a deeper place of peace somewhere within that environment. You may get to this deeper place by descending some stairs, walking down a sloping trail or going through a tunnel. This may lead to an even more peaceful part of the place you are in, or even to a special room or a temple or place of spiritual power. You may count backwards from 10 down to 1 as you picture yourself descending the stairs.

Then silently say the following words to yourself (try and memorise them):

"I feel the calm all through me…the calm that gives me strength…it is a calm strength, an easy strength…easy to be strong."

You don't need to think about anything at all...just allow yourself to experience the gradually deepening feeling of relaxation and ease...just feeling your whole body relaxing, as if you were **bathing in an ocean of tranquillity**. If you become aware of any tightness or tension in any part of your body, just let it be and relax...it will soften in time. If you notice thoughts or feelings, just let them be and they will gradually stop of their own accord in time. Just think of your thoughts as clouds drifting across the sky of your mind. Just allow your mind to find its own inner peace. **Don't try** to relax...**just let it happen** naturally...without any effort on your part...effortless relaxation...just enjoying that beautiful feeling of relaxation and ease. Just sitting or lying completely still, completely relaxed. This exercise need only take 10 mins but can be extended to 20 or even 30 minutes if desired. Count from 1 up to 10 when you're ready to awaken.

NB: Spend at least 10-15 minutes on the above exercise and if possible try to do it daily twice a day, morning and night. That is, upon awakening in the morning, and in the evening-before or after dinner or before you go to sleep at night. If you wish you may build up to 20 or even 30 minutes per session for even more profound levels of relaxation. If you only have 10 mins in the morning, then try and do 20-30 mins in the evening. Obviously 30 mins morning and evening will be more effective.

Once a week, on the weekend or your day off, spend a longer time relaxing in stillness eg. 30 mins or even an hour (eg. Two 30 minute sessions with a five minute break in between). This one more intensive session will help you to relax much more deeply during the shorter daily sessions during the week. This simple exercise, if done twice daily, will allow you to experience much greater levels of relaxation in your daily life. But it may take time to fully experience the levels of relaxation that you are capable of. How long will it take? That depends how long you have been under stress and how much tension you have been carrying around with you. Within weeks you will notice a real difference. In cases of severe tension and stress it could take up to a year of daily practice to fully realize the deepest benefits. If you have been tense for awhile, you may find that you may feel a little more tired than usual for a few weeks after starting to relax as you body releases that tension. But eventually this relaxation exercise will release more energy ☺

Some people refer to the above technique of relaxation outlined in point 2. as *"Stillness Meditation."* The concept was first developed by the eminent Australian Hypnotherapist and Psychiatrist Dr Ainslie Meares, author of the best selling *"Relief Without Drugs"* (available from your local library or online). During this period of relaxation the mind gradually comes to a very restful state. There is minimal mental activity. Just a pleasant sensation of relaxation. This is quite different to most other techniques of relaxation or meditation which usually involve quite a lot of mental activity and even will power. This "Stillness Meditation" could be described as a kind of restful trance in which the mind and body just gradually relax more and more deeply...effortlessly letting go…

You may wonder why I specify a position which is not too comfortable. In order for the mind and body to relax deeply we need to provide a slightly challenging environment. One which encourages the mind and body to relax more deeply than normal. When we lie on a comfy bed the soft bed does all the work-but the effect is temporary. As soon as we get up our stress and tension may return after a while. Lying on a hard floor or sitting on a hard upright chair for example will paradoxically help your body and mind to relax even more. Even better is sitting cross-legged or kneeling if you can manage it (but use your judgement here and don't cause any severe discomfort).

Just a reminder that during the week I run a Clinical Hypnotherapy practice by appointment only and that I am able to assist with the following issues (and many more besides...):
#Quit smoking #Motivation to lose weight (or achieve any other worthwhile goal) #Confidence
#Stress Management and Relaxation #Anxiety #Depression #Anger management
#Pain management #Natural painless child birth #Memory and learning enhancement
#Improved sporting performance #Group hypnosis #Self-hypnosis
#Release and healing from past traumas or grief #Relationship issues and many more...

Kind Regards, Sam Hayes.

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References: 1. Living Calm by Pauline McKinnon.
2. In Stillness Conquer Fear by Pauline McKinnon
3. Relief Without Drugs by Ainslie Meares
4. Master the Power of Self-hypnosis by C. Roy Hunte