

Bruce N. Eimer, PhD, ABPP

Hypnotize Yourself Out of Pain **Now!**

Second Edition

A Powerful, User-Friendly
Program for Anyone Searching
for Immediate Pain Relief



Hypnotize Yourself Out of Pain Now!

Second Edition

A Powerful, User-Friendly
Program for Anyone Searching
for Immediate Pain Relief

Bruce N. Eimer, PhD, ABPP

First published by

Crown House Publishing Ltd
Crown Buildings, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen, Wales, SA33 5ND, UK
www.crownhouse.co.uk

and

Crown House Publishing Company LLC
6 Trowbridge Drive, Suite 5, Bethel, CT 06801 USA
www.CHPUS.com

© 2008 Bruce N. Eimer

The right of Bruce N. Eimer to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First edition published by New Harbinger Publications, Inc. 2002
(Original ISBN: 1572242809)

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under current legislation no part of this work may be photocopied, stored in a retrieval system, published, performed in public, adapted, broadcast, transmitted, recorded or reproduced in any form or by any means, without the prior permission of the copyright owners. Enquiries should be addressed to Crown House Publishing Limited.

British Library of Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue entry for this book is available from the British Library.

International Standard Book Number

10 digit ISBN 184590087-1

13 digit ISBN 978-184590087-8

Library of Congress Control Number

2007938977

Printed and bound in the UK

Contents

Foreword	xi
Author's Foreword to the Second Edition	xiii
Preface	xvii
Acknowledgments	xxix

Part One

<i>Learn About Your Pain and How You Cope</i>	1
» Understand the Puzzle of Pain	3
» Evaluate Your Pain and How You Cope	21
» Understand What Hypnosis Is and Isn't	37

Part Two

<i>How to Hypnotize Yourself Out of Pain Now</i>	55
» Practice Inducing Self-Hypnosis	57
» Choose the Right Hypnotic Coping Strategy: Thinking and Behavioral Methods	79
» Choose the Right Hypnotic Coping Strategy: Distraction and Imagination Methods	107
» Change Your Pain Experience	143
» Solve Your Inner Conflicts about Your Pain	165
» Become AWARE and Find Your Inner Balance	195
» How to Select a Qualified Clinical Hypnosis Practitioner	201
Recommended Further Reading	207
References	211

Author's Foreword to the Second Edition

Since the publication of the first edition of this book, very little has changed in so far as the application of psychological and hypnotic techniques in the management of chronic pain and persistent pain syndromes. Few doctors and therapists have intensive training in this area. Many practitioners and patients remain skeptical of the value of hypnosis, self-hypnosis training and psychological techniques for relieving persistent pain and suffering. People generally turn first to drug interventions and medical/surgical procedures as these are what are reimbursed by health insurance companies.

Nevertheless, when all else has failed, many people who continue to suffer from persistent pain that has not responded to the gamut of medical treatments turn to alternative treatments such as acupuncture, hypnosis, imagery, psychotherapy, therapeutic touch, massage therapies, energy therapies, herbal remedies, etc.

I wrote this book to fill a gap in the self-help literature by providing a guide to using hypnosis, self-hypnosis and imagery techniques for managing chronic pain. I have used all of the techniques described in these pages in my practice with patients. Clearly, not all techniques work for everyone, but almost always I have found that there is a hypnotic technique for everyone or someone. In clinical practice, we assess the patient and explore which techniques have the greatest efficacy. The good thing is that, with psychological and hypnotic therapies, there is no significant downside issue of risks of negative side effects as there frequently are with drugs and surgery.

As the reader of this book, you will have the opportunity of exploring a wide range of hypnotic and self-hypnosis techniques for helping you to improve your ability to cope with and manage discomfort so that you can

live more comfortably. It is my suggestion that you read the entire book. However, how you go through it is your choice.

You may wish to read it cover to cover first and then go back to specific sections, or you may wish to read certain sections that appear to have the most relevance to yourself at this point in time. However you choose to go through the material in this book is fine, and I am confident that you will find a way of doing so that will work for you.

I myself, being a person with chronic pain, also use many of the techniques in this book to maintain and promote greater physical and emotional comfort for myself. In fact, I have been doing so for quite some time. The techniques have been presented so that you can work with the exercises on your own, or with a knowledgeable therapist or coach, if one is available to you.

Of course, please understand that the material in this book is presented for educational purposes only, as it is impossible and unethical to diagnose or treat physical illnesses or mental, emotional or psychological disorders through a book!

Please be advised that any new unexplained pain, or change in your pain symptoms should be reported to a licensed medical physician. It is irresponsible to attempt to mask pain symptoms that could be a signal of a medical condition that needs to be treated. Remember that pain is a signal that something is wrong that needs to be addressed. When everything medical has been done that should be done and can be done, then, it is time to explore psychological methods of coping.

This does not mean that you should not use good psychological coping tools in the acute phases of a painful condition. I am saying that the first thing to do is to get proper medical treatment. However, unfortunately, often medical treatments can only do so much, and you might be left to live with bothersome symptoms, or be forced to make hard choices. This is when many of the techniques described in this book can really be helpful. Knowledge is power, and this book will impart knowledge to empower you.

Ultimately, we all must help ourselves. Self-help requires knowledge, timely and accurate information, and a positive attitude. These all figure into the process of developing the skills that are necessary for effective coping.

In this second edition of this book, we have added an additional component. This is a 45 minute audio hypnosis CD. This CD contains

information about chronic pain and hypnosis, a hypnosis and relaxation induction, and a series of suggestions and exercises for improved coping with and management of ongoing pain. It is narrated by me, in my own hypnotic voice.

It goes without saying that this audio CD should only be listened to when you are in a safe and secure place where and when you can ignore outside distractions and turn your mental focus inward.

NEVER listen to this accompanying hypnosis CD while driving a motor vehicle or whenever your attention must be externally focused. To do so is irresponsible, and YOU are responsible for your own behavior.

This hypnotic pain relief audio CD features me leading the listener through a series of mindful exercises that teach gentle and safe ways to manage and relieve chronic pain. By listening to this CD, you will learn how to utilize the powers of your mind to gain greater control over your body through your mind, so that you can find your way to greater comfort.

While this CD was added as an accompaniment to this second edition of this self-help book, it stands on its own and can be used without the book. This CD uses Hypnosis to gently guide you into a state of relaxed concentration, awareness and inward focus. It teaches you the listener how to use Self-hypnosis as a coping skill for controlling chronic pain. The informative and pleasant suggestions on the CD are easy to follow, and the soothing and relaxing background music helps to further your experience of relaxation and comfort.

This Hypnosis CD is meant to be listened as often as you like in a safe environment when attention to external tasks is not required. It is designed to expand and improve your ability to control and cope with pain and diminish suffering with repeated listenings to the CD over a period of days. Each time you listen you reinforce your developing pain coping skills. Remember the old adage—practice makes perfect. Well, in this instance, practice makes better.

The CD specifically covers:

- What Hypnosis is
- Pain perception and Hypnosis
- Entering a relaxing state of Self-hypnosis
- Rating and lowering discomfort

- Pain relief and comfort imagery exercises
- Healing imagery
- Therapeutic touch and energy healing
- Comfort transfer techniques
- Instant stress control

The hypnotic and relaxation techniques on the CD are all described in detail in print in this book. So, please continue reading, listen to the CD at any point when you feel like doing so and it is appropriate to do so, and start getting more comfortable. I wish you peace and comfort and healing.

Bruce N. Eimer, Ph.D.

September 18, 2007

SIX

Choose the Right Hypnotic Coping Strategy: Distraction and Imagination Methods

One can always forget pain.

—Milton H. Erickson, M.D.

© Distraction: The Fourth D

Distraction refers to diverting or redirecting your attention away from one thing toward another; for example, away from pain and toward something neutral, pleasant, or less uncomfortable.

Distraction is an effective pain-control strategy because the conscious mind can only process a finite or limited amount of input and information at one time. The unconscious, on the other hand, can process many things at the same time. So the goal in using the strategy of distraction is to introduce stimuli and sensations that compete with the pain sensations for your conscious attention. If these competing sensations get to your brain first, they can prevent the pain sensations from ever reaching your brain. They can at the least slow down the transmission of the pain sensations up your spinal cord.

Distraction Works from the Bottom Up

When your conscious mind is paying attention to the sensations created by your rubbing or massaging the area of your body that hurts, it has less capacity to pay attention to pain sensations. Recall from our discussion

of the neurology of pain in chapter 1 that the nerve fibers that transmit sensations of pressure, touch, and vibration carry information to the brain faster than those nerve fibers that transmit pain sensations. So, when the faster fibers are fired up through the introduction of tactile-kinesthetic stimulation such as touch, pressure, rubbing, or massage to the area of discomfort, their sensory signals get to the brain before the pain messages do. This tends to close the pain gate in the spinal cord.

Similarly, when your conscious mind is deeply absorbed in other tactile-kinesthetic activities such as paying attention to your breathing, enjoying the beach, writing, or painting, it cannot pay as much attention to pain. This also closes the pain gate.

Distraction is probably the easiest and simplest pain-coping strategy. It also capitalizes on the fact that what is most important at any given moment is what tends to capture your conscious attention. For example, if you were thinking about your pain and suddenly you heard a series of loud booms signalling the beginning of a thunderstorm, you would be likely to forget about your pain temporarily if you had forgotten to close the windows on your sun porch. You would most likely be redirecting your immediate attention to getting those windows closed before the porch got soaked!

In sum, distraction works by introducing stimulation that competes with the pain in your nervous system. The distractors generate competing nerve signals that beat the pain to the brain. They get there first and close the gate on pain.

Case example. The following example illustrates the mind-body-pain connection. When I take a walk, I usually get a deep gnawing pain in the muscles of my lower back. At the end of my walk, sometimes that pain is almost biting in its intensity. The application of ice usually helps to alleviate the pain by numbing the area, but little else helps. While I'm walking, if the pain gets really bad, my posture is affected. The pain causes my spine and back to list or tilt to one side. If I'm tired, and I don't have enough energy to compensate posturally for that tilt, this bows me over even more and further increases the pain.

One thing I discovered that helps is when I have a walking partner. If I become pleasantly distracted in conversation, I am temporarily less aware of the pain. Somehow or other, when I am less aware consciously of the pain, my spine does not seem to list quite as much. In this case, when the walk is over, I'm usually in not quite as much pain.

© Self-Suggestions to Promote Self-Healing

The following eight self-suggestions for empowering your unconscious mind and your self-healing are adapted from Mutter (1987). For maximum effectiveness, choose up to *four* to give yourself before entering self-hypnosis. Work with the self-suggestions you have chosen for at least several days. Then, if you wish, you can switch to another set of self-suggestions.

1. I have survived despite all I've gone through; therefore, all of the powers that have gotten me through to this point are still with me.
2. Should I have a flare-up, my mind will immediately remember to use one or more fitting hypnotic coping techniques to promote my self-healing.
3. Should I have a bad dream, a flashback, or a flare-up, my mind will immediately remember that I have survived and that I will continue to improve.
4. Because my unconscious has a sacred trust to protect me, it will cause certain healthful changes in my body by allowing me to turn, move, twist, or bend, but only within my physical capacity and not beyond it.
5. I feel greater comfort and I stay within those limits and protect that comfort for prolonged periods of time.
6. As I continue to heal, I am able to move, turn, twist, and bend to a greater degree, but only within my physical capacity and not beyond it.
7. As I continue to enjoy my greater comfort, I need not fear going beyond my physical capacity and re-injuring myself.
8. By continuing to practice my self-hypnosis, I help myself to heal.

And here are some additional suggestions to explore.

9. My body and mind work together to strengthen my healing powers.
10. My body knows what to do to send healing energy to where it's needed most.
11. I deserve to be comfortable.

12. I have faith in my body's healing power.
13. Every day in every way I am getting better and better.
14. I am on safe and solid ground.
15. I accept myself fully and completely.
16. I am free of old, outdated childhood needs.
17. I am filled with positive energy.
18. Making mistakes and then correcting them positively increases my energy and my comfort and diminishes my discomfort.
19. Making mistakes and then correcting them releases and makes available more of my healing power to wherever it is needed most.



Exercise 7.3: The Mindfulness Meditation Self-Hypnosis Method

Mindfulness meditation has evolved out of the Zen Buddhist meditation tradition, and the present-day work of people such as Jon Kabat-Zinn (Kabat-Zinn 1995) and Herbert Benson (Benson 1997). The main idea is to concentrate on an idea or object and stay with it. That is what we were doing with the marble method and the attention to breathing methods.

This particular self-hypnosis method involves concentrated attention, too, but it adds another element. The object of attention is a self-suggestion, image, word, or sound that has special, positive meaning and significance and is associated with healing. Here are the steps:

1. Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor, your head, neck, and back supported, and your hands resting lightly, palms-down on your thighs.
2. Select a self-suggestion, image, word, or sound that has special meaning and significance to you. If you choose an image, word, or sound, it should be one that you associate with healing. This will serve as your mantra or object of concentration. Some potential images to choose from are: a candle flame, ocean waves, the surface of a mountain lake, forest pond, or stream, a river, the desert, the setting sun, a tree or plant, a garden, an animal, a crystal ball, or falling snow. There are many others. Some potential sounds to choose from are: the sound of ocean waves, a

running stream, a waterfall, the sounds of the forest on a summer night, a summer rain shower, chirping crickets, birds singing, or melodious singing or music. You now have the resources to choose a word or self-suggestion that meets your inner needs.

3. Now close your eyes, breathe naturally, and begin to pay attention to your breathing without trying to change your breathing.
4. As you continue to pay attention to your breathing, also begin to pay attention to your chosen self-suggestion, word, image, or sound. You can tie it to your breathing or not. If you choose to tie it to your breathing, continue to pay attention to your breathing, and silently say and hear, or visualize and see, your mantra or image each time you exhale. If you choose not to tie your mantra or image to your breathing, then just hear it or see it in the way that your unconscious presents it to you. As soon as you realize your mind has wandered, and you're no longer hearing or seeing your mantra or image, refocus your attention back to hearing or seeing it, whichever the case may be.
5. When you are ready to awaken, count silently from one to five, and at five, blink your eyes, open them wide, and feel comfortable, wide awake, and yet relaxed at the same time. Your comfort will last for some time after you have completed this exercise and awakened.



Exercise 7.4: The Projection Self-Hypnosis Method

This step-by-step method combines several steps from previous techniques we have covered.

1. Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor, your head, neck, and back supported, and your hands resting lightly, palms-down on your thighs.
2. Now focus your visual attention on anything that literally can serve as a "projection screen"; for example, a crystal ball, a clear glass or crystal bowl filled with water, or a blank, white sheet of paper. Stare at your projection screen while you breathe normally and pay attention to your breathing without trying to change your breathing.
3. As you continue to stare at your projection screen, allow your unconscious to bring to your conscious attention a dynamic image of an experience that it associates with pain relief and comfort. See this pain relief image in the projection screen.

... to tame pain, we must use our brain

The use of hypnosis as a tool for relieving pain is not experimental—it is tried, tested, and proven. This book focuses on your role in being your own healer. It will help you explore a wide range of self-hypnosis techniques, improving your ability to cope with and manage your pain and allowing you to live more comfortably.

You will learn how to

- Use self-hypnosis to relieve your pain
- Tap into your own innate ability to control pain
- Choose the method of self-hypnosis best suited to you
- Interrupt your body's chronic pain loop
- Use a variety of powerful tools to reduce or eliminate your pain

“Those who suffer chronic pain have often spent a long time trying medical and alternative approaches without finding relief and, under such circumstances, it is understandable to lose hope and the motivation to keep trying new methods. If this describes you, take heart - reading this book will really make a difference for you and will help you regain control of your mind and body. ... the most comprehensive and effective program for lasting pain relief that I have ever found.”

Susanna Bellini, NLP trainer, counsellor, hypnotherapist and also a chronic pain survivor

“Full of valuable information and empowering methods easily understood and practiced without any additional training, *Hypnotize Yourself Out of Pain Now!* provides the keys that can unlock solutions to even the most stubborn pain problems. It's hard to imagine a better resource on the use of hypnosis with pain conditions.”

Maggie Phillips, PhD, author of *Reversing Chronic Pain*, *Finding the Energy to Heal*, and *Healing the Divided Self*

“... questionnaires in the book allow the reader to measure their experience of pain and how that changes as they make progress. This makes it almost a workbook rather than simply a theoretical text on the subject. ... an impressive work, accessible and clearly written.”

Stuart Harragan, Clinical Hypnotherapist

“With a number of powerful methods to reduce or eliminate discomfort and a free CD of exercises to assist in pain relief, this great value book and CD set will help anyone who is suffering to tap into their own innate ability to control and manage pain.”

Stephen Gawtry, Editor, *The Watkins Review*

“... valuable and thought-provoking for people experiencing chronic pain. Eimer approaches his subject with the first-hand knowledge and commitment of someone who, after an accident, sought relief from the resulting persistent pain.”

Anthony Scratchley, *Addiction Today Magazine*

Bruce N. Eimer, PhD, ABPP, is a clinical psychologist in Philadelphia with over twenty year's experience treating people with chronic pain using cognitive-behavioral and hypnosis strategies and is certified by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis as an Approved Consultant in Clinical Hypnosis. He is a chronic pain survivor and has used self-hypnosis techniques to manage his pain.

Family and Health/Pain Management
UK £12.99 US \$24.95



Crown House Publishing Limited
www.crownhouse.co.uk - www.chpus.com

ISBN 978-184590087-8



5 2 4 9 5



9 781845 190087 8