

Self-healing through relaxation



By [Claudia Klein](#)

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Relaxation is the best way to counteract stress. Stress itself is nothing new, it served men well from the earliest of times to either prepare to fight or to flee. When confronted with stressors, the body reacts with a series of biochemical changes, which heighten the sensitivity of the nervous system.



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Depending on which part of the autonomic nervous system is triggered, multiple commands are automatically carried out with lightning speed: the heartbeat quickens, the reflexes sharpen, the muscles tense, the pupils dilate, blood pressure rises, lungs take in more air to supply extra oxygen, the liver releases stored glucose for extra energy, blood supply to sexual organs is diminished and sexual desire is lost, digestion is reduced and the blood's ability to coagulate increases to prevent excessive blood loss, just in case!

This is an amazingly complex and very useful phenomenon when we are faced with severe physical trauma and the body recovers quickly from its stress response once the event is over. Historically, stress has been experienced in these short bursts, and this can be useful when coping with a severe illness or hardship, but the stressors and strains of the 21st century are somewhat different.

Today, stress is virtually constant, anxiety over job performances, unhappy relationships and money worries - the list is endless. It is almost impossible to escape the causes of stress and unless catharsis occurs (release of the emotions causing stress) the body has very little opportunity to restore and subsequently tries to adjust. This resulting chemical imbalance may cause physical illness.

Learning to relax

When faced with continuous stress the body will eventually enter the exhaustion stage and the weak links in the individual biochemical makeup will begin to break down, resulting in various symptoms such as headaches or digestive problems, allergies and/or high blood pressure.

Simple relaxation techniques, such as self-hypnosis or listening to guided visualizations (CDs and downloads from mindworks.com) or certain music styles will counteract stress and restore or increase overall well being.

Our body has remarkable self-healing potential, which you experience regularly. When you go to sleep after a tiring day, something happens during the night that lets you wake up feeling noticeably refreshed and recharged. You will agree that what you experience, even before falling asleep, is relaxation. If relaxation can be linked to restorative actions of the body, what is actually happening?

Just by reading this, billions of neurons are firing on and off in your brain. When each of these electrical firings is detected as a whole, a "wave" effect is observed. These cumulative electrical rhythms are referred to as brainwaves. Brainwaves occur at different frequencies, which is the number of times a wave repeats itself within a second.

The natural phenomena of falling asleep takes you from a fast brain wave activity called beta through to alpha, the beginning of relaxation; to theta, the state of tranquillity, creativity and very deep relaxation, which reflects the state between wakefulness and sleep; and finally to delta, the brainwave state experienced in the deepest stages of sleep - a state of total unawareness, of unconsciousness.

Therefore, if you apply techniques to consciously lower your brainwave activity, you mimic the natural process and achieve the advantages that go with it.

ABOUT CLAUDIA KLEIN

Owner and Manager at the South African Institute of Hypnotism and Mindworks.com

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