



*Take Control Of Your Life with Hypnosis:
Eliminate negative habits, Create healthy changes, Achieve optimal well-being.*

Hi Everyone!

I am now settled into my new office with Maine Integrative Wellness, Suite 102, at 222 Auburn Street in Portland. [Same phone: (207) 773-5200; Office hours: Mondays through Thursdays.] I also see patients on Fridays at my office in Blue Hill, Maine. (Phone: (207) 773-5200).

June 2011

PAIN!

Did the title, *Pain!*, trigger a memory? Most of us have experienced pain in our lives. It might have been the result of one of the following events: a sprain, dislocation or broken bone; a torn muscle, ligament, cartilage or tendon; a blow that caused a bad bruise; a toothache, earache, or headache; a child birthing experience; a skin puncture, wound, or burn; internal organ-related pain; surgical pain; or phantom pain resulting from the loss of a limb. Pain can be the immediate result of a known cause or it can sometimes mysteriously appear, for no apparent reason.

When pain becomes uncomfortable, people usually seek some type of medical help. That may completely resolve the pain. However, sometimes, pain may not respond completely to traditional treatment and may linger indefinitely and become chronic. Chronic pain, 80% of which is thought to be caused by stress, is a long-lasting discomfort that leads to a major change in a person's ability to function -- arthritis and low back pain are examples. [1] According to Dr. Mehmet Oz, approximately 50 million Americans are disabled because of chronic pain. [2] Those people are often open to trying anything and may seek out hypnosis. It is important to have documented diagnoses from medical practitioners about possible causes of pain. Even when "there's no physiological reason for the pain," a hypnotherapist must be careful not to eliminate any pain that may be indicating the need for attention or treatment.

As a complement or adjunct to standard medical treatment, hypnosis is being used in all phases of pain progression. For example, hypnosis is being used more regularly with burn patients. "Dabney Ewin, MD, clinical professor of surgery and psychiatry at Tulane University School of Medicine, hypnotizes burn victims in the emergency room. Ewin's published case studies include a restaurant worker who burned his arm up to his elbow in a 370-degree deep-fat fryer. The doctor induced a deep trance within 4 hours of the accident and provided hypnotic suggestions to the victim. The injury healed in 17 days with relatively little scarring (showing that hypnosis can slow or even stop the inflammation and blistering that can cause permanent damage)."[3] Elvira Lang, MD, a radiologist and Harvard Medical School professor, published a ground breaking study in 2000, on surgical hypnosis. She and her colleagues found that patients

who were guided through hypnotic relaxation during surgery, used 50% less pain and anti-anxiety medication, suffered 75% fewer complications and left the operating room 17 minutes sooner than the other groups. [4]

Breast cancer surgery patients often suffer side effects such as pain, nausea, and fatigue during and after their operation. Several previous studies have suggested that hypnosis may reduce pain and recovery time, in addition to the need for medications after surgery. In a study published online in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, Guy Montgomery, Ph.D., of Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York and colleagues conducted a clinical trial to examine these reported effects of hypnosis when it is given within one hour before surgery. Each hypnosis session in the clinical trial began with suggestions for relaxation and pleasant visual imagery. All the patients in the hypnosis group were also given suggestions on how to lessen pain, nausea, and fatigue, and specific instructions on how to use hypnosis on their own. The results of the study affirmed the role hypnosis can play in contributing to more positive surgical outcomes. Patients in the hypnosis group required less anesthesia than patients in the control group. They also reported less pain, nausea, fatigue, discomfort, and emotional upset after surgery.[5]

In my own practice, I have helped many people prepare for surgery and optimize their healing afterwards. I have worked with clients facing surgery for a variety of health issues, including the removal of uterine fibroids (without local or general anesthesia), repair of a severely injured hand, neck injury, knee replacement, and shoulder reconstruction. In each case, pain during and after surgery was reduced and recovery and healing time were accelerated, as assessed by the attending physicians. Before coming to me, one man had initially undergone an operation to insert an artery from his abdomen down into his left thigh - to increase circulation. He was in the hospital five days following the operation, which ultimately was not successful. Two years later he wanted to repeat the operation with a new doctor. Before this second surgery, he and I created a personalized hypnosis protocol of specific suggestions to maximize healing, minimize pain, and reduce the recovery time needed. I recorded this personalized hypnosis program for the man to listen to before and after surgery. He recovered quickly and went home the day after his surgery.

Hypnosis can also alleviate the pain of childbirth. I have helped five women have "pain-free" child birth experiences. The process began with them gathering up all messages they had received and accepted about the birthing process having to be painful for the mother. They had become conditioned to expect pain. But, while in hypnosis, they disconnected the impact of those messages on them and broke the fear-tension-pain syndrome by removing the belief in painful child birth from their subconscious mind. I assisted each of them in creating a program describing exactly how they wanted their childbirth experience to be. At worst, they might feel dull sensations - but no pain. The personalized CD I recorded for each woman, together with the affirmation they chose reinforced the successful outcome. The following testimonial from one of the "pain free" mothers sums up the experience of all five women. "When I had my first child, I was in labor for 30 hours. This one was 3 hours total. It was very fast, easy, comfortable and enjoyable!!!"

In a *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* editorial in which he describes the history of hypnosis in medicine and the evidence for why hypnosis could reduce pain, David Spiegel, M.D., of the Stanford University School of Medicine in Palo Alto, California, noted: "It has taken us a century and a half to rediscover the fact that the mind has something to do with pain and can be a powerful tool in controlling it ... It is now abundantly clear that we can retrain the brain to reduce pain: 'float rather than fight.'" [6]

HEALTH TIPS

This month's Health Tips offer recommendations for enhancing brain health.[7]

Exercise

Researchers from the University of Illinois Beckman Institute reviewed dozens of past studies and found evidence to support the assertion that regular aerobic exercise can reverse detrimental age-related changes. Workouts were found to increase "not only speed and sharpness of thought but also the volume of brain tissue." The researchers noted that "as little as 50 minutes of brisk walking 3 times a week" was found to have this brain-expanding effect.

Drink alcohol sparingly

Keep your alcohol consumption within this safe and healthful limit: no more than one drink a day. A Wellesley College study found that "the more alcohol a person drinks, the smaller his or her total brain volume becomes." Their recommendation: no more than one drink a day. You could further reduce your intake by, for example, replacing half a glass of white wine with spritzer.

Eat blueberries

National Institute on Aging and Tufts University researchers found that rats who consumed blueberries showed increased cell growth in the brain's hippocampus region, which governs learning and memory. The scientists credit anthocyanin, the berry's blue pigment, for these positive cognitive changes. Sprinkle fresh blueberries on your cereal or salad; whirl them fresh or frozen in smoothies.

[1] Ron Eslinger, BCH, NGH Certified Instructor, Pain Management Certification Program

[2] www.sharecare.com/question/number-one-reason-patients-doctors

[3] tooleytransformation.com/HypnosisForBurnTreatments

[4] The Healing Power of Hypnosis by Alexis Jetter, PREVENTION, March 2006

[5] <http://psychcentral.com/news/2007/08/29/hypnosis-aids-breast-cancer-surgery/1208.html>

[6] Hypnosis Aids Breast Cancer Surgery by Rick Nauert, Ph.D. Retrieved from <http://psychcentral.com/news/2007/08/29/hypnosis-aids-breast-cancer-surgery/1208.html>

[7] Seven Surprising Ways to Boost Your Brain by Elizabeth Svoboda. Retrieved from <http://online.prevention.com/7waystoboostyourbrain/index.shtml>



Happy Health!

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Remember: *Hypnosis can be done in the office, by phone, and via Skype.*