



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

Hi Everyone! Here is the 9th issue of Hypno-Healthgrams. You can access previous issues on the Newsletter page of my website: www.hypno-health.net

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ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

Whatever your age and stage, and whether you are a once-in-awhile recreational player, a weekend athlete, a serious team member, a collegiate standout, or a seasoned professional, hypnosis can help you improve your game! While hypnosis cannot make you into something you are incapable of becoming, it can enable you to become the best you possibly can.

You might remember hearing about the former Soviet Union Olympic teams having many hypnotists available to their athletes in the 1950's, when their performances were outstanding. Or perhaps you read in the Time Magazine cover story on the 1984 Olympics, that on the night before the finals in women's gymnastics, Mary Lou Retton (age 16) lay in bed at the Olympic Village rehearsing her performance ritual. She had done the same review on hundreds of previous nights, imagining herself performing all of her routines perfectly. "The result was a performance of perfection, presented with charm, poise and confidence, culminating in a gold medal." [1] The same kind of results are available to any sports enthusiasts who uses their minds to maximize their ability and potential.

I helped a young athlete, who I'll call Bob, maximize his performance with hypnosis. Bob was a superior baseball player in Little league and on school teams. He was so highly touted, both as a defensive catcher and hitter, that many people expected him to start for his high school varsity team as a freshman. But when spring indoor practice began, it was clear that something was amiss. Bob had no steam on his throws, whether he was throwing back to the pitcher or down to second base. In fact, his former "rope" throws had become "rainbows." All attempts to help him with his "problem" were unsuccessful.

In the late fall of his sophomore year, his parents asked me to work with him. As we sought answers from his subconscious mind, we discovered several minor causes and one major one. Bob easily released the influence of the minor ones, but the major one took more work. The high school varsity baseball coach had an "aura" about him. Highly successful as a coach, he expected a lot of his players, but also treated them fairly. It turned out that Bob was afraid of the

coach because of what he'd heard about him and what he'd seen when attending varsity games, which was very different from the more relaxed atmosphere he'd experienced previously. The pressure to succeed and the fear of failing under a competitive coach caused Bob to panic. (His subconscious mind protected him by inducing him to develop the rainbow throw). If he couldn't make the varsity as a freshman, he wouldn't fail at that level. He played junior varsity ball that first year, but still had the weak throw.

Bob was able to understand and release his fear, create in his subconscious mind a new positive program, and reinforce it with self-hypnosis and a personalized CD until it became his new habit. We also threw together in the school gym later in the evenings, to reinforce physiologically what Bob had created in his mind. The following three years he was the varsity baseball team's starting catcher and an excellent hitter.

Sports participants face the same obstacles to success that people face in their every-day lives. The biggest is fear and it comes in many forms.[2] Fear of failure is common in sports and, like all fears, causes tightness and constriction in individuals, hindering performance. Fear of success creates obstacles as does fear of humiliation, which often takes hold as golfers address their ball on the first tee in front of a gallery of spectators. Even competition itself can produce a feeling of intimidation that handicaps results. Hypnosis can help athletes release mental blocks, fears, and beliefs that limit and short-circuiting their success.

One of the most important aspects of using the subconscious mind for athletic performance is the development of positive attitudes. Negative thoughts that affect performance can be changed or eliminated and replaced with positive ones. This process enables an athlete to improve skills and enjoy the sport without the hindrance of frustration, discouragement and anger caused by episodes of poor performance.[3] Hypnosis also builds self-confidence and enables a person to focus on a successful outcome, rather than a poor performance.[4]

An assistant golf professional was preparing for his Player Ability Test. Prior to our first session, his best score for a round of 18 holes was 80. As we reviewed possible influences in his life that had contributed to his only having scored 80 on one occasion (he felt he had the ability to score lower), it became apparent that a parent's constantly negative, critical attitude toward him had been the major factor. After the young man released those inhibiting influences, he imagined playing the best he possibly could and reinforced that with specific visualizations. He also imagined incorporating a strong sense of confidence within himself. He used his conditioned-response word and personalized CD to enhance the changes he had made in the two office sessions. For the 36-hole Player Ability Test he shot 77/76, for a total of 153.

"Anchoring" and "mental rehearsal" are two other important hypnotic techniques that were included in the last example (below). In anchoring, a memory or image of athletic excellence is recalled or imagined. When the client mentally reached the peak of that performance, the associated emotion is anchored or reinforced, producing what is commonly known as muscle

memory. That memory or positive feeling is then automatically released during peak performance times.[5] Mental rehearsal can be even more productive than physical practice. Imagining success, as done so consistently by Mary Lou Retton, can involve all the senses and may be the ultimate key to superlative performance.[6]

A 74-year-old gentleman came to Hypno-Health to correct his golf swing. When practicing, his swing was always smooth. But whenever he played a round of golf, his swing with a driver and long irons changed. Many years of having played tennis competitively, which he stopped before he "wanted to," caused him to grip the clubs too tightly, resulting in a compromised swing and erratic ball strikes. He mentally released the tennis influence and imagined his swing being consistently smooth and fluid, just like in practice. He reinforced the new swing in both the conscious and self-hypnotic states with a conditioned-response word and personalized CD. In two letters (paraphrased below), he expressed his delight with the results.

"I thought it best to write in my state of elation. I have profited immensely. Last week I surprised myself by some wonderfully comfortable 3 woods (a partner said: "my what a smooth swing"). Yesterday, I played 18 holes without one of those "grabs from the top" - all my drives and 3 woods were swings!! Marvelous! I am delighted with these changes and send you many thanks".

"In case there was any doubt about the enthusiasm in my last note to you, here is a bit more ammunition. Monday I played in the Maine Seniors Tourney at Martindale CC in Auburn. I had a 38 on the front nine, the lowest 9 hole score I have ever had on any course anywhere. Today at the Portland CC I had an 80, the lowest score I have ever had for 18 holes anywhere. Yes, I was putting well today, but none of this would have happened if I didn't have a smooth, consistent swing off the tee and fairway - my bugaboo of the past".

HEALTH TIPS

Building Muscle and Aging. A recent review by University of Michigan researchers indicated that people 50 or over who are physically inactive can lose up to 1/2 pound of muscle per year. A younger, sedentary adult can begin this type of loss even earlier. The researchers noted that even someone well over 50, can increase strength by 25 to 30 percent and add almost 2 1/2 pounds of lean muscle in 18 to 20 weeks. Also noted were the benefits of progressive resistance training for older adults, beginning with squats, modified push-ups and tai chi, Pilates or yoga. [7]

[1] www.Arizona Center for Hypnosis.com/athletic.html

[2] www.Arizona Center for Hypnosis.com/athletic.html

[3] Athletic Performance brochure, researched by the National Guild of Hypnotists educational faculty

[4] [www.northshorehypnosis.com/Athletic Performance.html](http://www.northshorehypnosis.com/Athletic%20Performance.html)

[5] www.LPGMindworks.com/sports.html

[6] Athletic Performance brochure, researched by the National Guild of Hypnotists educational faculty

[7] *The American Journal of Medicine*, March 2011



Happy Health!

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