



Can Self-Hypnosis Help Reduce Blood Pressure?

WHAT IS SELF-HYPNOSIS?

Self-hypnosis involves using mental training techniques to give suggestions to oneself. It is possible to attain the same state by listening to a guided recording or utilising other methods that evoke a level of awareness that is different from normal waking consciousness.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to be a global facilitator of health and wellness through access, education and advancement of Traditional & Complementary Medicine (T&CM). The World Health Organization (WHO) advises that lifestyle-related diseases (or non-communicable diseases) are responsible for more than 70% of deaths worldwide each year.

Knowledge represents empowerment. By sharing this evidence-based, peer-reviewed research, we aim to support everyday people to take ownership of their wellness, by making informed decisions and choices in conjunction with their health professional.

How This Study Could Reduce Your Risk of Heart Disease or Stroke

According to statistics published by the WHO, cardiovascular disease - a category that includes both heart disease and stroke - is responsible for an estimated 31% of all deaths globally. This study investigates how self-hypnosis accompanied by music may help reduce the risk of heart disease or stroke. It is titled:

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC THERAPY AND SELF-HYPNOSIS ON DECREASING BLOOD PRESSURE LEVEL AMONG HYPERTENSION PATIENTS.

You can read the full study here: <http://www.ijnhs.net/index.php/ijnhs/article/view/317/137>



Why Is This Study Important?

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, approximately one in three adults in Australia have high blood pressure. Also called hypertension, this condition is associated with an increased risk of stroke and heart disease, as well as chronic illnesses including kidney disease and diabetes.

Medication is one way of reducing dangerously high blood pressure, but it may cause side effects. This is why lifestyle changes and non-pharmaceutical treatments are often recommended as first-line approaches to prevent and treat hypertension.

The WHO estimates that two-thirds of people suffering from hypertension live in low-income and middle-income countries. For this reason, it is desirable to find evidence for free or inexpensive options that people can use at home to reduce their blood pressure.

Blood pressure is described using two numbers, using the pressure unit 'millimetres of mercury (mmHg)'. The first number is systolic blood pressure (SBP), or the maximum pressure in the arteries as the heart contracts, pushing blood through the body. The second number is diastolic blood pressure (DBP), which is the lower or 'resting' level of pressure between heartbeats.



What Does This Mean For My Wellness?

High blood pressure is believed to be caused by factors ranging from a [high salt intake to a family history of hypertension](#). Some of these can be addressed by lifestyle changes such as increasing your levels of physical activity. However, the more options you have available for lowering blood pressure, the more ways you can take action to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease.

Although this trial was based on a relatively small sample size, meaning the results should be interpreted with caution, the statistically significant effects justify further research. For people diagnosed with elevated blood pressure, this study suggests regularly listening to self-hypnosis recordings and utilising music therapy may be effective ways of supporting medication and lifestyle changes to control hypertension.

The researchers also noted that some participants complained of anxiety, irritability, insomnia and headaches as symptoms of their hypertension. After the self-hypnosis therapy, these participants reported a reduction in their symptoms. The researchers suggested that this result may be associated with the way listening to specific kinds of music stimulates key regions of the brain.

Previous research suggests that this may promote the release of endorphins (feel-good hormones) and control levels of the stress hormone cortisol, leading to feelings of relaxation and reduced stress. A relaxed state could in turn lead to greater oxygen flow, decreased stiffness in blood vessels and increased blood circulation in the body, thus assisting hypertension.

How Does This Relate to Hypnotherapy?

Previous research has shown non-pharmaceutical modalities including breathing exercises and Transcendental Meditation® may be associated with significant decreases in blood pressure. The authors of this article also cited studies indicating that hypnotherapy can help people with hypertension reduce their blood pressure. [Sound therapy](#) can also play a role in supporting this shift of consciousness, and has been studied for its potential to [reduce tension and improve mood](#).

There is evidence to suggest listening to instrumental music can affect the functioning of the brain in several ways. These include influencing an area of the brain that regulates emotion, supports the relaxation response and may promote the release of molecules that can decrease blood pressure.

In 2020, researchers published the results of a study exploring the benefits of self-hypnosis accompanied by instrumental music for reducing blood pressure. The participants of this study were 46 hospitalised patients diagnosed with hypertension.

Half were assigned to an intervention group receiving standard medication, as well as guided self-hypnosis recordings accompanied by instrumental music, which they listened to over three days. The remaining participants were allocated to a control group and given pharmaceutical medication only.

Key Findings About Self-Hypnosis to Help Reduce Blood Pressure

- It was reported that the medication taken by both groups was associated with a significant reduction in systolic blood pressure, but not diastolic blood pressure. By comparison, the diastolic blood pressure of the intervention group decreased significantly after three days of self-hypnosis.
- It was found that the average systolic blood pressure of participants who underwent self-hypnosis decreased by a greater degree (16mmHg) than participants in the control group (11.78mmHg), however this difference was not statistically significant.
- Although the effects of self-hypnosis on sleep quality and emotional states were not a focus of this study, the authors noted that participants using self-hypnosis reported “their feelings became calmer” and the music helped reduce insomnia.

Disclaimer: The above does not constitute medical advice, and as with any exercise or wellness program, please consult your medical professional before commencing treatments involving hypnosis.

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