

SESSION ONE: HEAVINESS

In Session One you will be learning to use phrases built around the idea of heaviness. Before starting you may like to reread the comments about this concept in Part One.

THE PHRASES

The autogenic, or self-directing, phrases in Session One are:

My right arm is heavy
My left arm is heavy
Both arms are heavy
My right leg is heavy
My left leg is heavy
Both legs are heavy
My arms and legs are heavy

SAYING THE PHRASES

The phrases should be repeated to yourself — not out loud. Say or think them slowly, and, as you do so, keep your attention gently focused on the part of your body to which the phrase refers. Repeat each phrase one or more times, with pauses in between. Always start with the phrase "My right arm is heavy". However, if you are left-handed you may prefer to begin with your left arm. If this is the case, be consistent, *always* start with your left arm.

ONE PHRASE, OR ALL FIVE

When you begin to practice, use one phrase only. For instance, just say "my right arm is heavy". Try this out and see how it suits you. If you find that a relaxed, comfortable, heavy feeling is being generated and is flowing to your other limbs, obviously the single phrase works well for you. After a few days, you may be ready to move on to another limb. Your clinician will discuss this with you and give you guidelines on when to include the other limbs.

LENGTH OF PRACTICE SESSION

When you are saying all five phrases, a practice session may last three to five minutes. If only one is being used, the time will be shorter; as little as 20-30 seconds.

FIRST PROGRESS CHART

AWARENESS

We spoke earlier of an attitude of passive awareness. It is very important to maintain this attitude. At the same time, "passivity" should not be taken to mean inattention to your bodily state. It is your awareness that is directing the flow of command to your limbs. So make sure that your awareness is held on the part in question; you should be aware of it, of what it is feeling, of what is taking place.

BREATHING

Breathing is often used as a relaxation technique by itself. However, in autogenic or self-directed relaxation, breathing during the practice session should be done in a passive way. In other words, your body is just allowed to breathe. We do not want you to control your breathing or change it in any way. Just allow it to occur while you are doing the exercise. In fact, if your mind goes to your breathing, treat it as you would any other distracting thought. Simply allow your attention to return to the self-directing phrase.

RECORDING

Autogenics is to be done without expectation. We would like you to record what occurs to you during autogenics for the first three days. We would also like to know the date, time of day, and length of time you are practicing. If after the first three days, you begin to feel the heaviness flowing to other parts of your body, begin to add on the additional phrases. When you do this, begin to record your progress on the second, more detailed, chart which is described on the following pages.

Date	Time of Day	Length of Time	Comments
July 8	8:00 AM.	1 min.	Feeling relaxed, relaxed getting somewhat positive. Arms felt arm, heaviness not experienced.
8	5:30 PM.	3 min.	Repeated phrase 5 times, notice heaviness. Feet picked, some heaviness in other limbs, pressure in 2
			FILL OUT REMAINDER OF THE CHART!

ESTABLISHING A ROUTINE

Once you understand the method, and have tried it out a couple of times, it is helpful if you settle into a routine for your daily practice.

We suggest that you follow these steps:

1. Find a quiet, comfortable place and either sit or lie down.
2. Record your state on the chart provided.
3. Check your posture and spend a little time ensuring that it is correct.
4. Close your eyes; pause for a few seconds.
5. Take a deep breath in; a full breath — using both the abdomen and the chest — and then let it flow out, neither pushing it nor holding it back.
6. Begin your self-directing phrases with “my right arm is heavy”. (If you are left handed, you may wish to start with your left arm.) Say each phrase one or more times, with pauses between the phrases.
7. If directed by your clinician continue with the remaining phrases; left arm; right arm; right leg; left leg; both arms and legs together.
8. As you are repeating the phrases, be passively aware of the sensations in your limbs.
9. When you have finished repeating the phrases, make fists, tighten up both arms and flex them, take a deep breath in.
10. Breathe out, and open your eyes as you relax both arms.
11. Record your state on your chart.

RECORDING YOUR PROGRESS

In order to keep track of your progress and to evaluate the benefits that autogenic training is bringing to you, a progress chart is included on the following pages. The notes that follow explain each heading on the chart.



DATE

There are usually differences between your tension levels from day to day, or on week days as opposed to the weekend. Noting the date can thus be very informative for both you and your clinician.

TIME OF DAY

Many people find it easier to practice at certain times of day rather than at others. Recording the time of your sessions will reveal any such variations.

YOUR LEVEL OF TENSION

A simple scale has been devised to help you measure the amount of tension you are experiencing.

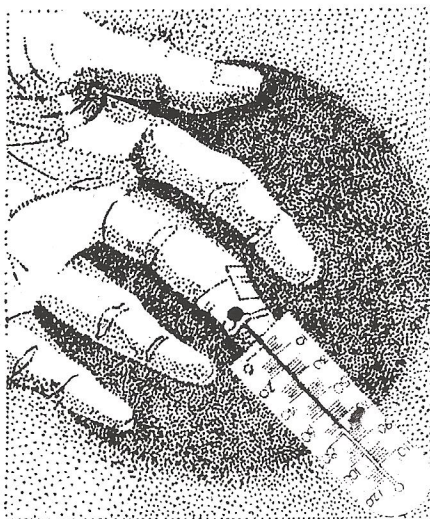
<p>BODY: (physical state)</p>	<p>Very Relaxed</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	<p>Very Tense</p>
<p>MIND: (mental state)</p>	<p>Very Calm</p>		<p>Racing</p>

Before and after each session, estimate your levels and enter them in the appropriate columns. You may find your body is at level one, while your mind is at level five. Don't worry if you find it hard to be precise. It will become easier with experience.

PULSE RATE

TEMPERATURE

To obtain your skin temperature, tape an aquarium thermometer to a finger for at least three or four minutes before and after your sessions.



GENERAL COMMENTS

If you experience any pleasant or unpleasant reactions during your sessions, please note these for discussion with your clinician during your next visit, together with any other ideas or questions.

PROGRESS CHART

[illegible][illegible]

Racing

[illegible]

Review

When you have mastered the “getting ready” section and have practiced Session One for a few days we would like you to fill out the following checklist as a measure of your progress and understanding. It will be useful in discussing with your clinician.

1. I understand what is meant by an autogenic, or self-directing phrase. ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. I understand the relationship between the phrases and the changes that can occur in my body. ☐ ☐
3. I understand that the phrases are tools with which to achieve an overall relaxation response. ☐ ☐
4. I understand the need for a passive attitude when doing the exercise. ☐ ☐
5. I am able to return my attention to the exercise when distractions occur. ☐ ☐
6. I recognize the importance of a suitable time, place and posture. ☐ ☐
7. I understand the need to record my state and progress on my chart. ☐ ☐
8. I have established a routine and do the exercise as a series of steps. ☐ ☐
9. I understand the advantage of working with a clinician and have taken the necessary steps to do so. ☐ ☐