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## **How to Relax from your Panic Attacks and Anxiety: Panic Attacks and Hypnosis**

When I was beginning to get on the road to recovery from my anxiety, panic attacks and agoraphobia, one of the very useful things I discovered was something called the “relaxation response”<sup>1</sup>

Herbert Benson, M.D. coined the term “relaxation response.”

He was speaking about the physiological changes that happen within the body when it is relaxed during meditation.

Particularly Dr. Benson observed that during this period of relaxation physiological changes such as levels of chemicals in the blood which serve as indicators for stress decreased, oxygen consumption decreased, breathing rates decreased, heartbeat decreased, and increased skin resistance.

Dr. Benson surmised: “The relaxation response is a physical state of deep rest that changes the physical and emotional responses to stress... and the opposite of the fight or flight response.”

Yes this is a good thing indeed because do you remember earlier installment we discussed the physiological changes that occur during a panic attack? Well these findings mean that the “relaxation response” induces just the opposite effect.

Here are some simple steps you can follow today:

- Sit down in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
- Imagine the muscles of your feet relaxing all the way up your body to the top of your head
- Focus your attention on your breathing.
- Breathe in deeply and then let your breath out.

Do this for ten or twenty minutes.

While the above exercise is helpful, I would recommend starting out with hypnosis.

I'm not talking about being put into a trance where you're trapped and can't wake up.

I'm talking about relaxation.

Hypnosis meant for stress reduction can be very helpful for panic attacks.

Obviously relaxation is very important for anyone who suffers from anxiety, panic attacks and agoraphobia.

You can reap many of the benefits experienced during the “relaxation response” and hypnosis is easier when starting out (in my opinion) than meditation.

When I discuss hypnosis I’m referring to a simple process in which someone with a relaxing voice leads you through a relaxation induction. One way to think about a relaxation induction is to think of getting a mental massage.

That’s why it’s particularly helpful to have someone whose voice relaxes you.

Please don’t get me wrong: meditation is not necessarily difficult; but I think initially the anxiety sufferer can better benefit from hypnosis because hypnosis does not require one to remember or focus on any particular technique as is the case with meditation.

That certainly is my perception anyway. I like to think of hypnosis as meditation but with training wheels. It’s a way of taking a nice time-out to relax, especially for someone suffering from anxiety or panic.

I know when I started get better, hypnosis was one of that really helped me. It was relaxing and felt good. Also, knowing this relaxation was good for me made the process more even more enjoyable.

One can learn to induce some of the same benefits as the “relaxation response” through hypnosis and this, in my opinion, is the primary reason why it is so valuable.

For more information about hypnosis and anxiety and panic attack recovery, please sign up for our free newsletter by simply visiting [www.PanicAttackRecovery.com](http://www.PanicAttackRecovery.com) and providing your email address in the sign-up box. Subscribers can opt out of our newsletter at any time.

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1. <http://relaxationresponse.org/>