Autogenic Training

according to J. H. Schultze

🔗 a guidance for self-study🔗
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1. What you should know about AT...

What is autogenetic training?

The autogenic training is as a method of focused self-relaxation, which was developed in the 1920s by the physician Johannes Heinrich Schultz. It is used for relaxation, as a preparation for mental or physical activities or as a regulation of intensive emotions (such as excitement, anger or aggression) and as a supporting adjustment of your body for a quiet sleep.

AT has an effect on organ functions, which are controlled by the autonomic nervous system. Therefore, we use our own imagination. For example: we imagine subjective relaxation signs like silence, severity or warmth – hereby we manipulate our brain cells and they react like in a state of relaxation. As a result of regular and systematic practice, you will learn to cause such a state arbitrarily.

Basic principles of relaxation?

The autonomic nervous system controls organism by the coordination of functions of the organs.

The functions within the autonomic nervous are classified into two systems, these – mostly acting as opponents: the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nervous system. The sympathetic nervous system sets the body in an active state of readiness, while the parasympathetic nervous system is the reassuring part. The perception of parasympathetic reactions is important for relaxation. These are in addition to the mentioned phenomena in autogenic training: increased salivation or peristaltic sounds.

The effect of autogenic training is based on the law of ideoplasia – imaginations have the tendency to turn into real actions. For instance, when you think of your favorite meal and try to imagine it, than your mouth will probably watering. That means, your mind is “talking” to your body and this dialog occurs permanently and unconscious – sometimes as a soothing and healing one, sometimes it is harmful. AT takes advantage of this legitimacy. You can support this by loosen tight clothing, taking of your glasses, imagine your slogans and getting into a relaxed posture.

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The better the reflection effect was trained, the sooner you can expect the occurrence of the autogenous switch. Thereby, it is essential to be concentrated and to be consciously focused on your physical relaxation signs.

This kind of concentration used in AT is also called passive concentration. It is a state of specific attention without subjective tension. Most people know this condition by reading a book or listen to music. The typical result of passive concentration is the total focusing on the matter without exerting yourself. The relaxation of the organism causes a lowering of the consciousness. The result is more calm and rest and additionally a better dealing with yourself and the environment. Because when your body is totally relaxed, you cannot be psychically disturbed.

Who can use AT?

Prerequisites for AT are a voluntary, autonomous participation and cooperativeness. It is necessary that your daily practice exists of 2 to 3 training units (each about 5 minutes) during your two-month practice phase. Once you have acquired AT-basic skills, 3 maintaining training units per week will suffice. Most important is the usage of your skill to automate them.

However, there are a number of diseases which cannot ensure a successful implementation. Do not perform AT when you suffer from:

- acute psychotic crisis with delusions, hallucinations, persecution mania and disorders in your physical sensations
- prescription drugs with mind altering effects
- grave forms of debility, mental handicap and disturbances of consciousness
- obsessive compulsive disorders
- acute and intensive emotional drains
- acute heart attack risk
- peptic ulcers
- vascular spasms
- constitutional or neurological-related serve myopathies

It is possible that AT cannot lead the desired effects in total as a result of some diseases. Perhaps you have to go without AT when you suffer from:

- high expectations on yourself and others; intensive achievement and success orientation, rush and tenseness
- moderate forms of remittent schizophrenia, depression, hysterical and hypochondriac diseases, diseases of the cardiac circle, headaches and cardiac neurosis
- abuse and misappropriation of AT, for instance: abstraction

Single modifications of exercises are necessary for those who suffer from:

- diseases of the cardiac circle – warmth exercises
- diseases of the heart – heart exercises
- migraine or headaches – head exercises
- gastrointestinal diseases – belly exercises

Appropriate references will be mentioned again in the course during the exercises.