

**NPTEL  
NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE**

**Course Name  
Stress Management**

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**Lecture 17: Autogenic Training,  
Imagery and Progressive Relaxation**

Hello everybody welcome to the second module of strategies for relieving stress.

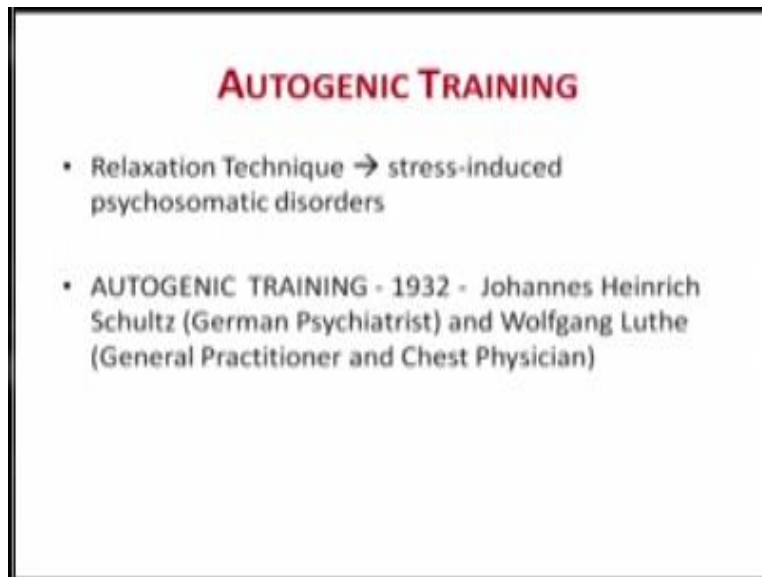
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**MODULE 2**

In today's session we shall talk about organic autogenic relaxation training the use of imagery in relaxation and progressive muscular relaxation techniques we all.

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**AUTOGENIC TRAINING**

- Relaxation Technique → stress-induced psychosomatic disorders
- AUTOGENIC TRAINING - 1932 - Johannes Heinrich Schultz (German Psychiatrist) and Wolfgang Luthe (General Practitioner and Chest Physician)

So far we know that techniques of relaxation help us to come down and throughout these sessions I have been talking about relaxation as a very useful technique in relieving stress or it is very helpful in anxiety disorders and it is very helpful in anxiety disorders so today we are going to discuss about autogenic training relaxation and imagery so to start with autogenic training what exactly is autogenic relaxation training or what is autogenic relaxation autogenic the term as it suggests comes from generating within oneself or it comes from the word auto.

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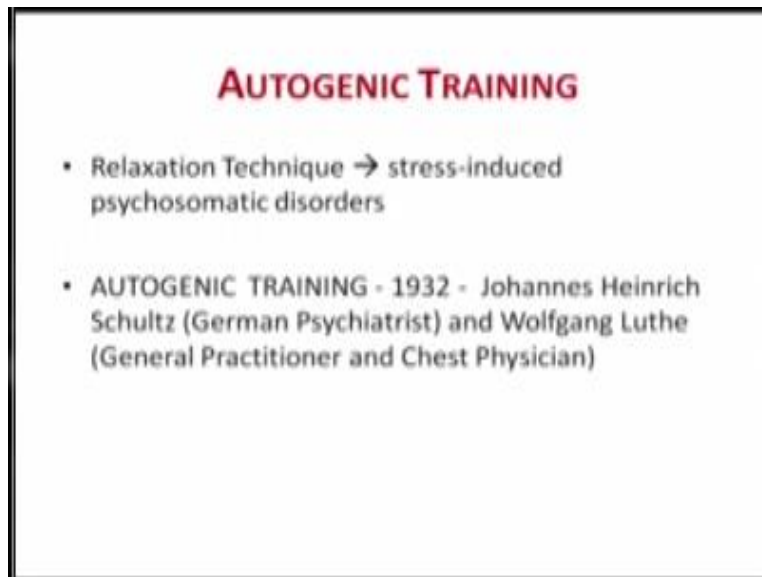


**Benefits of Autogenetic Training**

- **Autogenic** means “self-generating”
  - you do the procedure to yourself
  - self-healing nature of autogenics
- Special indication for AT
  - Internal locus of control - autogenics more effective than external locus of control (Lehrer,1996)

So it is a self-generating measure that one uses to relax himself and this technique can be followed by the individual himself so once he is aware of the ways he can learn to relax he can practice it within the household or in office or any other place for by himself it takes around 10 to 15 minutes to practice autogenic training and it really helps to relax the individual's body as well as mind.

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**AUTOGENIC TRAINING**

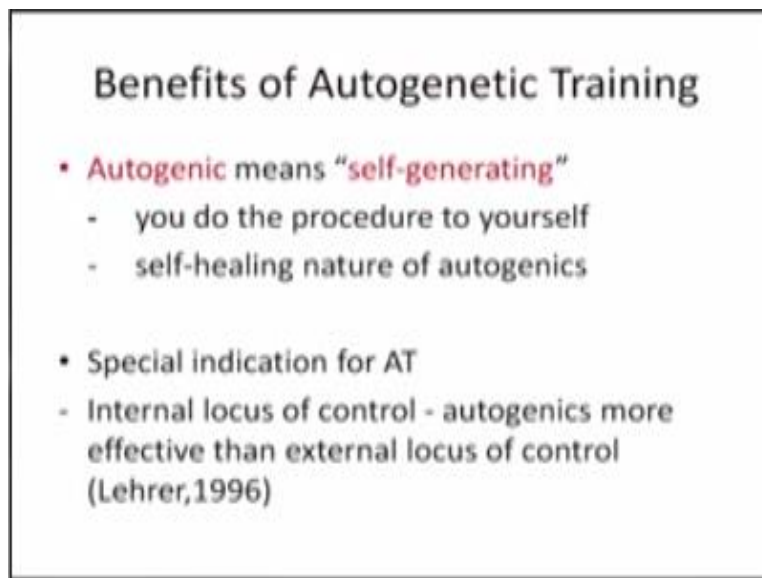
- Relaxation Technique → stress-induced psychosomatic disorders
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Now to start off with the history of autogenic training in 1900 it was started with Otto hypnosis when Oscar worked introduced the term autohypnosis where he tried to induce hypnotism within an individual by helping the individual to induce it by himself now this held walked used this with his patients and he saw that it patients with using Auto hypnosis actually reported of less fatigue less tension and fewer psychosomatic disorders we know that the psychosomatic disorders are created due to stress and anxiety problems.

So psycho soma is actually the mind over the body so basically what happens in psychosomatic diseases is or psychosomatic disorders is that the anxiety plays a role in the manifestation of anxiety a manifestation in of stress or anxiety in different parts bodily organs so the anxiety is manifested by different organs so it could be expressed as asthma it could be expressed as headaches and other different forms of bodily reactions so when walked started practicing autohypnosis in 1932 Shultz saw that his patients developed to physical sensations when they were practicing auto hypnosis.

And they were primarily one of general bodily warmth and the other was of heaviness on the limbs and toes so from inspired by that Johannes Heinrich rules and Wolfgang Luther one of his students they started introducing they introduced the idea of autogenic training autogenic training

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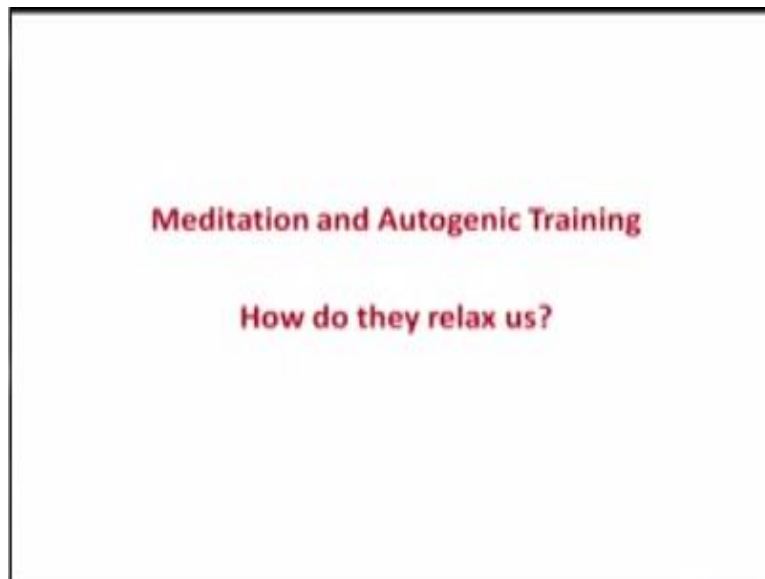
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As I said focuses primarily on the control of your body by yourself so it is primarily self-healing in nature or in the nature of autogenic and it is it is really effective for people with an internal locus of control now we have talked about internal and external locus of control earlier so I will not get into that just with a small briefing that individuals who feel that they are responsible for certain events that are happening within in their environment.

They generally brief they generally have internal locus of control and individuals who feel that they are not responsible but the events and the circumstances surrounding them are actually responsible for the causal behavior patterns in them and generally have an external locus of control or that the environment has a major influence over their behavior so now coming back to autogenic training.

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We see that what actually happens in autogenic training is there is a generalized warmth that is spread over the due to the dilation of the blood vessels and this results in increased blood flow the sensation of heaviness is caused by a muscle relaxing so as I was talking about Shules patients who responded within autogenic training initially with Otto hypnotism who responded with more of a heaviness in the limbs and the toes.

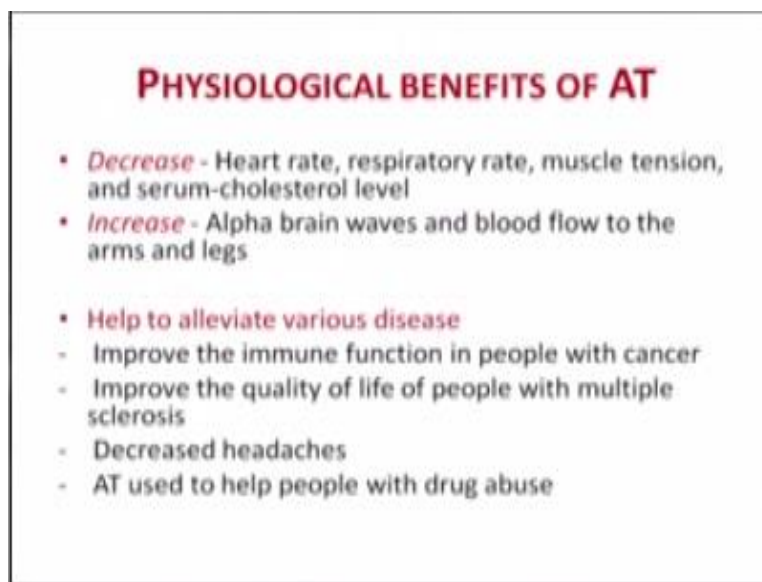
So this is the toes so till here and the heaviness in the limbs so the arms as well as the legs and because of the warmth the sensation of wantonness this was because of these primary physiological changes that the body was undergoing now we will get to the next slide which where we ask ourselves a question then what is the difference between autogenic training and meditation now we all know that meditation is another way to relax the individual and here we are talking of autogenic training also having an influence on the mind and body.

So it is affecting the it is helping to relieve psychosomatic illnesses then how is how are the two techniques different the meditation focuses primarily on the mind while autogenic training focuses more on the bodily organs so it is said that meditation when it is trying to relax it is using

the mind to relax the body but autogenic training uses bodily sensation of heaviness and want to first relax the body and then expand this relaxed state to the mind by the use of imagery.

So how are the techniques relaxing us in autogenic training the mind the first the body is relaxed and then it is the relaxation is transferred as a feedback system to the mind and here autogenic training uses imagery so let us get back.

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**PHYSIOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF AT**

- **Decrease** - Heart rate, respiratory rate, muscle tension, and serum-cholesterol level
- **Increase** - Alpha brain waves and blood flow to the arms and legs
- **Help to alleviate various disease**
  - Improve the immune function in people with cancer
  - Improve the quality of life of people with multiple sclerosis
  - Decreased headaches
  - AT used to help people with drug abuse

To the benefits of using autogenic training so autogenic training has his physiological benefits as well as psychological benefits so some of the physiological benefits are it decreases the heart rate the respiratory rate the muscle tension and serum cholesterol level excuse me so what exactly is happening over here so it is actually if you see that this is actually affecting the sympathetic nervous system so the sympathetic activation that happens during a stressful situation or that in that a body goes through during chronic stress that is being reduced by the organic training.

And the increase of alpha brainwaves and blood flow to the arms and legs now alpha brainwaves are related to relaxation so if you do an easy in an individual who is in a relaxed state you will see that there are many alpha waves that are available in the response mechanism or in the EG

waves that you will see so this just indicates that when the body is relaxed the mind also starts relaxing or the brain also starts relaxing and with autogenic training as we were saying that once the sympathetic activation rules down then likewise there is a change in the brain activation also now minded the relaxation in no way whether it is Meditation or it sort of dynamic training or any other form of relaxation it does not mean that the alertness reduces.

What happens is the individual is relaxed but is also alert on the contrary to hyper vigilance there is sharpness and equity in attention that is seen with the use of relaxation techniques now some of the other physiological benefits of autogenic training is it helps to improve the immune function this has been researched and it is seen that it helps you improve the immune function and it has affected it has helped people with cancer it improves the quality of life in ms or multiple sclerosis it helps to decrease headaches.

So if there is a constant Vasodilation and vasoconstriction of muscles that is that happens in tension headaches that is decreased with autogenic training and it also helps people with drug abuse.

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**PHYSIOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF AT**

Other findings

- alleviate menstrual discomfort
- Breathing in dyspnea
- sleep in insomnia
- relieve pain





Some of the other findings are people who have menstrual girls and women who have a menstrual discomfort it also helps in reducing that discomfort so the relaxation technique helps the muscles to calm down muscles to relax so instead of the constriction of the muscles once autogenic training helps to relax the muscles and that way in it also alleviates menstrual discomfort this dyspnea is a form of a symptom that exhibits shortness of breath or there is a distress in breathing and this may not always have an organic respondent for that.

But now corresponding to it but what happens is people suffering from it actually have a distress and they breathe in as if with a lot of effort so it is like so people with anxiety very often express this dyspnea so autogenic training helps in dyspnea and it helps in the breathing patterns in normalizing the breathing patterns that is primarily when it is related to anxiety it helps in sleep so we often see that in insomnia patients anxiety patients suffer from insomnia or disturbances in sleep.


And this is reduced by the help of autogenic training and it also helps in relieving pain so these are the physiological benefits getting to the psychological benefits of autogenic training it helps reduce anxiety depression tiredness and increases the resistance to stress so what happens is when the muscles is muscle musculature of the body of the musculoskeletal system is not responding to stress with sympathetic activation and immediate response that feedback also goes to the brain that this is not so anxiety provoking a situation.

So the body the body is relaxed so the brain will not be as tensed and likewise who this be spoken about Lazarus's cognitive appraisals so here the feedback from the body mechanisms is going to the brain and the brain understands this is not so anxiety provoking a situation so like is it likewise it improves the resistance to stress so an individual gets less stressed and less hyper vigilant and less muscle contractions during a stressful situation with autogenic training by after inducing autogenic training so it also has it has been seen that it also improves the performance of athletes.

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**PREREQUISITES OF AUTOGENIC TRAINING**

- High involvement and motivation
- Self-direction and self-control
- Ability to maintain a particular body posture
- Minimizing influence of external stimuli  
Focusing on the process
- Attending to bodily sensations



So what are the prerequisites of autogenic training how do we know that autogenic training is actually helping an individual or rather when do we know that autogenic training will help so what is required so a high number amount of involvement and motivation is required for autogenic training so it is not like having a medicine that somebody has dispensed to you and without even the appreciation of the context one just gulps in the medicine just because my mother has told me or my guardian has told me and my doctor has told me.

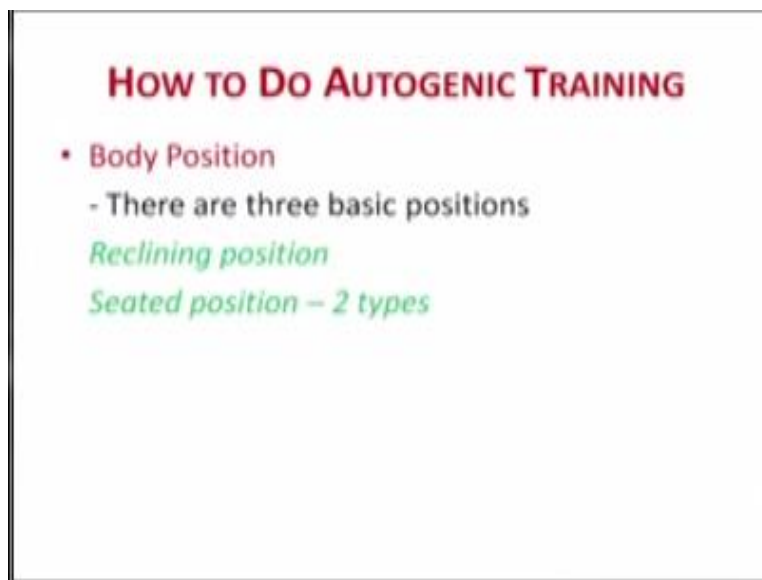
So if there is an involvement and motivation then autogenic training works the reason being that if this relaxation technique will be induced by the individual so it is not from outside so it is auto-generated so there has to be a focus or self direction and self-control so it is not like I will start this and I do not want to do this let me leave if a person is doing a task doing autogenic training with such a motivation then it is not going to work or if there is a lack of self-control that ok I am just going to rush through it somehow then it is not going to help.

Ability to maintain a particular body posture so if an individual is not able to stay at a place for a longer time because of some muscular skeletal problem or maybe because of some other

problems of hyperactivity or muscle muscular illnesses so then it autogenic training will not be helpful so it is important to maintain a particular body posture for a longer time.

Now it one another very important thing is to focus on minimizing the influence of the external stimuli and focusing on the process of autogenic training so I need to have the motivation to do that ask I need to have the self-control to start the task and complete the task I need to be focused about doing it and of course be able to maintain a particular body posture for quite some time say around 15 minutes and of course able to attend to the bodily sensation so if I am not being able to follow these postulates then it will be a problem for me to continue with the autogenic training or rather it autogenic training is not going to be very helpful for me.

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**HOW TO DO AUTOGENIC TRAINING**

- **Body Position**
  - There are three basic positions
    - Reclining position*
    - Seated position – 2 types*

So now how to do the autogenic training you will find various manuals available and there are also several books that will actually tell you how to do the autogenic training for relaxation but primarily we are going to discuss some of the things that I generally practice and some of the things that I have adopted from a few textbooks now body posture is a very important thing for organic training I was talking about it right now and there are three basic positions for autogenic

training one is a reclining position where you are lying down in a relaxed way the other two are seated position.

So you can sit down like this with your arms on the armrest and the other is where you do not have a backrest and you are standing on a stool and you are sitting forward bent like this now the idea is that you in a relaxed state so it is not that you are distressing your muscles your muscles are contracting and on that pasture you are trying to do the autogenic training.

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**SIX STAGES OF AUTOGENIC TRAINING**

1. Focus on sensations of heaviness throughout the arms and legs
2. Focus on sensations of warmth throughout the arms and legs
3. Focus on sensations of warmth and heaviness in the area of the heart
4. Focus on slow, calm breathing
5. Focus on sensations of warmth in the abdomen
6. Focus on sensations of coolness in the forehead

Greenberg, 2012

Now there are six stages of autogenic training so it starts with focusing on the sensations of heaviness throughout the arms and legs so you just close your eyes and then start focusing on each sense organ or rather each muscle group they start with the especially with the arm that is pro predominance so if you are a left-hander you could start with your left arm and then move on to your other arm and then to your legs and to other parts of the body so it starts with the sensation of heaviness throughout the arms and legs then the sensation of warmth throughout the arms and legs and the sensation of warmth and heaviness in the area of the heart.

So it from the limbs it has spread the chest and then you focus on the slow calm breathing when you focus on the strength of warmth in your abdomen and the coolness in the forehead so you see you are gradually your whole body is becoming relaxed so the other thing that we do when we are doing autogenic training primarily is focusing on particular sense sensational areas so we are initially focusing on say when I am saying your predominant terms say your predominant arm is your left arm.

So it could be like my left arm is heavy my left then you say that 4,4 times then my right arm is heavy now both my arms are heavy now you have to feel this so but what I generally do is when I am for autogenic training or for relaxation training for progressive muscular relaxation I have seen that this works very effectively with students when I make them sit in a place focus on all the sounds that you can hear outside now mind you when you are trying to do a relaxation training be it autogenic training be at relaxation be at meditation be at a guided imagery.

For any relaxation training you have to have some time for yourself you cannot start with rushing through the session I have 15 minutes at 16<sup>th</sup> minute I have to go somewhere so let me just wind this up I am doing an exercise and I will wind it up and I will go for the class that will not help so you need some time to calm down though the whole exercise is for around approximately 15 minutes but it takes some time for the body to calm down and then move ahead with the exercise.

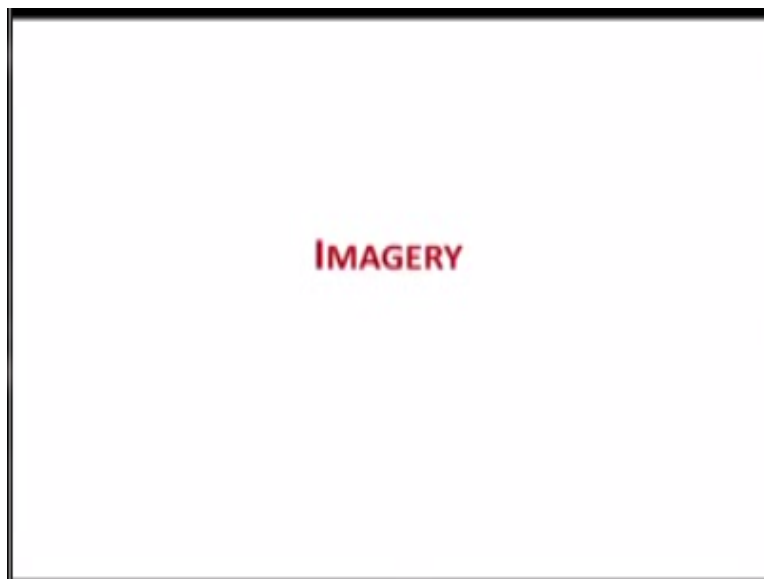
So what I what I see is very effective for the students is when I or even for others that I have seen that you sit in a you signal relaxed position or even if you lying down we focus on all the sounds that you can hear outside so you have closed your eyes you're loosened all the buttons and if there is a watch you have kept it aside you have switched off your mobile so your it should not go up suddenly and making you jump to see that and you have kept it is primarily a quieter place where you are doing your relaxation and then you're focusing on all the sounds that you can hear one by one.

So it could be right now I can hear the sound of the AC then what helps is if I close my eyes and focus on the sound on the rhythm that is that it has many times when the fan is on it also has a

rhythm so there after we gradually so this is not a part of the training but this actually warms you up for the autogenic for any relaxation training then you know as I said that it focuses on so then you start with the exercise where you are focusing on first the arm limbs where there is you are seeing this a heaviness you start if you are focusing on your left limb so left arm you see that your left arm is feeling heavy so my left arm is feeling heavy I can feel the heaviness and you say to yourself or four times then you move to the next arm and that is the way it actually spreads from the arms and the legs then there is our sense of warmth.

That is spreading through the arms and legs then warmth and happiness in the chest and this look breathing you are focusing on your breathing and then do the warmth the abdomen and finally there is a relaxed for it so this training it can is next followed by imagery.

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Now imagery can also be used along with other techniques like in relaxation JPM are progressive muscular relaxation it also uses imagery so too in today's session I am going to discuss imagery separately then you can try and link it up with autogenic training you can link it up with relaxation technique with guided eventually now you will several manuals are available online and you can also purchase some of them and it is this I personally follow this and I have

got a very good response from the students and it is really helpful to relax you and the best part of the autogenic training is that it can be done within 15 minutes of time.

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**IMAGERY**

- To imagine a scene, place or event that you remember as safe, peaceful, restful, beautiful and happy
- Bring all your senses into the image with
  - Sounds of running water and birds
  - Smell of cut grass
  - Taste of favourite ice cream
  - Warmth of the sun

So now getting back to imagery what exactly is imagery so imagery is actually imagine imagining a scene or place or event that you remember as safe, peaceful, restful, beautiful and happy so what one of the things that I have seen that works very effectively is imagining a natural scene and especially a natural scene that does not have the other individuals involved so you with nature that really works well one of the reasons I believe it is because the individual when you were with another individual the thoughts shift from the relaxing imagery to thoughts relating to the individual and then as our thoughts jump from one to the other we gradually move back to more anxiety provoking problems or situations that preoccupy our thoughts all the more.

So what is important is that is why it to you being alone with nature so the imagery that you choose maybe one that you have visited one that you have like done that is very litigable lesson to you it could also be that you have something that you have read off or something that is fictitious you are thinking about such a scene it could be something like the sound of running water and birds smell of cut grass list of your favorite ice cream warmth of the Sun so what is

happening is all these as you can see are actually addressing some of the sensations so the sound sensation so then it is the smell then it is a taste and then it is the touch so basically we are trying to involve our sense organs into the relaxation process.

One of the visual imagery is that I generally work with my students and which is very effective is the image of the sea and the you are walking down a sea beach with barefoot and on the soft sand where there are you can see the hills far away and it is around evening and the birds are going back to their homes and you can there you can feel the soft salty breeze on your face occasionally the water from the waves are coming and touching your feet you are walking on the soft sand it is very pleasant there is a pleasant us all around you.

So I form myself the cemetery works well and I have seen this works well with students but the so you are with nature here you are with the sea you are with the sky the red sky during dusk here with the mountains and you can see the hills faraway so this is a very pleasant imagery for people who like the hills and the see if there is somebody who has hydrophobia or the fear of water it will not work if somebody has an unpleasant experience with the mountains or with the hills.

Now that is not going to work so this imagery is not going to work for him either so you have to when you are selecting an imagery it has to be something that is pleasant to you but it is always advantages if you select something that is more related to your to your personal experience or to you is that something you have read if you are trying to practice it with somebody else then you must ask the individual what his or her preferences instead of just inducing him to your pleasant imagery.



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## Physiological benefits

- Decrease headaches
    - When children and adolescents with chronic headaches were taught imagery, 88 percent reported a decrease in the frequency of their headaches and 26 percent said they were headache-free.
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## Psychological benefits

- Improve sleep
- Decrease posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) severity
- Help to alleviate moderate depression
- Decrease to urge behavioral addiction like gambling
- Decrease performance anxiety




So some of the.

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## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- To induce **nerve-muscle relaxation**
- Developed by **Edmund Jacobson**
- Based on the premise that the body responds to anxiety-provoking thoughts and events with **muscle tension** → This physiological tension, in turn, increases the subjective experience of anxiety.
- Synonyms
  - **neuromuscular relaxation** (because the nerves control muscular contraction) or **Jacobsonian relaxation** (named after its developer)



Now going back to coming to progressive muscular relaxation now progressive muscular relaxation is again to induce nerve muscle relaxation and it was introduced by admin Jacobson so several times we call the progressive muscular relaxation technique as Jacobson's progressive or we often call it as JPM are so what happens in JPM is that you are trying to relax each muscle group of your body so the premise on which it is built is the body responds to anxiety provoking thoughts and events in muscle tension we all know that when there is an anxiety provoking situation the muscles are tense I gave you the example of you waiting throughout the day for the results of a of an exam.

So imagine that when the exam results did not come out at the end of the day you are still very tired that that is because of the muscles being taught and tightened due to the anxiety so the relaxation procedure the progressive muscular relaxation actually wants to relax these muscle groups its focuses on relaxing these muscle groups and reducing the physiological tension and in this way actually reducing the subjective anxiety so when you are actually talking of anxiety as I just mentioned it is a cumulative accumulation of the physiological manifestation.

So whether my muscles are taught whether I have a dryness of mouth whether I am having butterflies in my stomach and all this and how the individual is perceiving the situation so also the thoughts related to this situation so now if it is like this I cannot deal with this so then the individual will be more stressed so it is accumulation now if we reduce one of it so if we reduce the muscular tension like I was mentioning in autogenic training this feedback is going to the brain.

So I know this is very severe this is really scary I am standing in front of a thousand people and I am speaking oh god I am going to faint but what is happening to my body my body is not responding like that my body is pretty comfortable I am not getting butterflies in my stomach normal nor my legs trembling then that means this is this feedback is going to the brain and then the brain says ah this is not that anxiety provoking so I can actually deal with this situation.


So automatically your anxiety comes down so basically that is what we are trying to do in progressive muscular relaxation we are trying to bring down the cumulative anxiety by reducing the muscular anxiety or the muscular tension so it is often progressive muscular relaxation is often called neuro muscular relaxation for the same reasons as I said that it because the nerves and control the muscular contractions or also Jacobson relaxation or JPM.

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## Physiological Benefits of PMR

- learned relaxation of skeletal muscles can be generalized to smooth muscles, causing relaxation of the gastrointestinal and cardiovascular systems
- Effective in treating
  - headaches
  - backaches
  - side effects of cancer
  - insomnia, pain, and high blood pressure

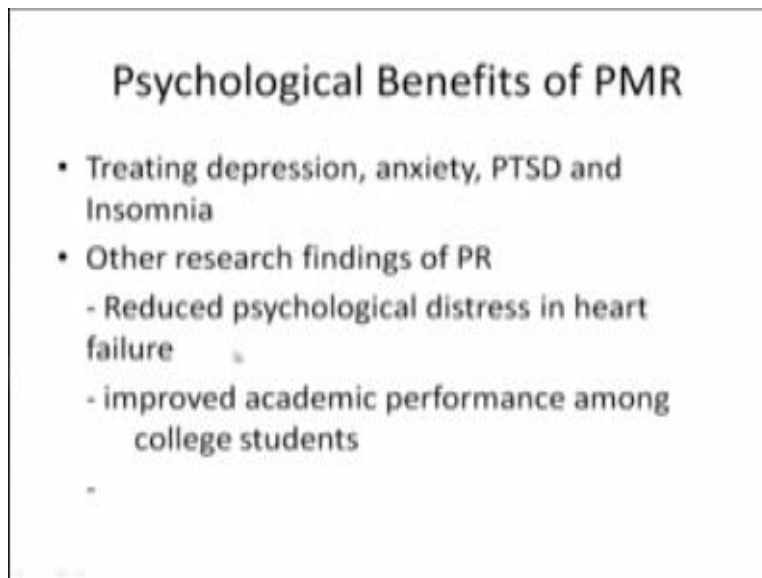


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So some of the benefits in PMR or JPM is the same as that of photogenic training so the physiological benefits being that it actually helps to smooth muscles and it helps the gas to enter relaxation of the gastrointestinal and cardiovascular system so anything which has been sympathetically activated that a sympathetic activation will be produced and it helped it is helpful in treating headaches backaches and side effects of cancer primarily pain and also is helpful for hypertension that is high blood pressure and disturbances and sleep or insomnia or for that matter other sleep disorders also.

Some of the psychological benefits like autogenic training it helps with depression anxiety post-traumatic disorder stress disorder.

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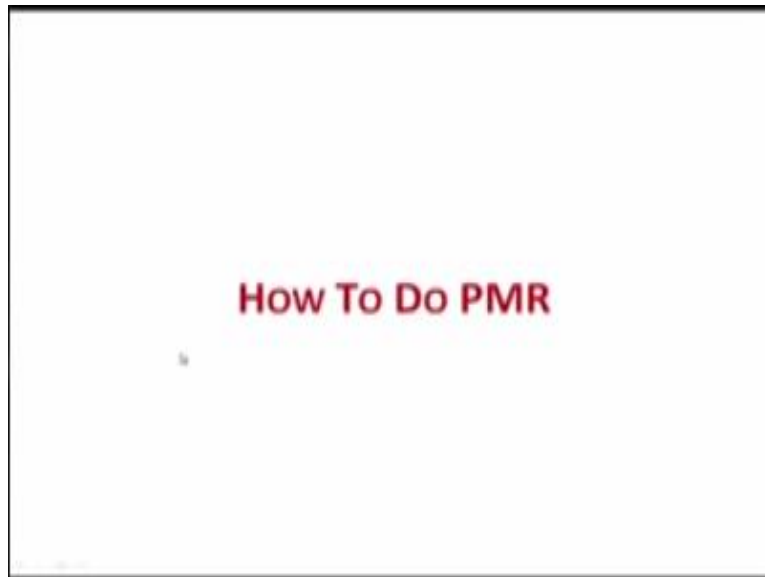


**Psychological Benefits of PMR**

- Treating depression, anxiety, PTSD and Insomnia
- Other research findings of PR
  - Reduced psychological distress in heart failure
  - improved academic performance among college students

It and psychological it help in reducing psychological distress in heart failure and it has also been seen to be helpful in improving the academic performance among college students so one of the reasons for that being that it helps to focus your attention so the moment your anxiety is reduced you are able to focus more on stuff that you need to.

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So how to do PMR so basically when you are doing a progressive muscular relaxation it generally addresses the four major muscle groups that arms head may section and legs so these are the four major muscle groups that it addresses so the idea is to tighten each muscle group so feel the contraction then release it and you feel the relaxation as it spreads so what you are doing is feel the blood coming back to your fist.

So I am just giving you an example of tightening one muscle group that is tightening of the fist okay and then relax now this is followed with each part of the muscle group so it could start with this then the then the other fist so you can start with right hand then left hand then you move up to these muscles then tightening of the shoulders and then the neck the forehead.

So we have said that we address for muscle group so now after we have covered the arms the head then midsection so the back muscles the chest muscles and finally the leg muscles so what you are doing is you are actually focusing on the Titan state and then focusing on the relaxed state so in both ways you are learning to relax so there is a difference you understanding the difference between the contraction and the relaxation many times when we are watching a movie

we are you watching a cricket match you sitting like this without even realizing that these muscles are taught.

So when you are asked to relax then you realize oh are you are told that okay relax this you're drooping down your shoulders so similarly in muscular relaxation we are showing you a muscle JPM are actually shows you the difference between the two and this is you know once the individual is trained to do muscular relaxation he can actually practice this by himself so basically after the muscular relaxation techniques are followed so for each muscle groups it may be followed by a guided imagery gently for JPM are it has to be guided by a trained professional initially at least then after the training is it is learned then if the individual can follow it by himself.

So one of the advantages of relaxation technique is that you can also for progress in muscular relaxation is you can actually focus on several muscle groups like you need not do it for all the muscle groups of the body but if somebody has a headache so he could focus more on the shoulder muscles the neck muscles the head muscles along with the some of the preliminary hand and arms and limbs so these are so primarily the head and midsection would get the focus at that.

So because the because of the tension headache now this you can actually a trained professional can actually help you to learn the relaxation techniques in this in today's session we are not trying to make you learn the techniques of in details but what I am trying to do is I am actually giving you an overview of how these things can be done but you can definitely follow it up with a professional and you can also read up a lot on it but to start off with.

I will give you a tip today which you can start following but it is a very simple thing you can sit in your in a relaxed position anywhere take time out take 15 to 20 minutes out for yourself sit in a quiet place losing your buttons there should be any tightness around you and your mobile should be switched off it is quite excuse a quieter setting just close your eyes focus on the other sounds outside as I was mentioning.



So even the preliminary of a relaxation technique also helps you to relax so basically in today's session what we after that you know what you can do is then after that gradually just focus on the each muscle group and just that tell yourself that well this arm is relaxed this my right arm is relaxed my left arm is relaxed so and then focus on each area of your body then think about a separate imagery the something of pleasant to you and just try and lie down and relax just be in that imagery for a while then gradually you can get back to the current state.

Now I am not telling this in details because I am not conducting a relaxation exercise here but you could definitely try this you could I just gave you an overview in today's session so we spoke about autogenic training we spoke about imagery and we spoke about progressive muscular relaxation in very brief very briefly but I believe if you try and practice all of these techniques are you get in touch with the professional is really going to help if anybody is going through stress thank you.