

SUMMIT PRESS
HYPNOSIS FOR MOVING THROUGH
ILLNESS
BY LAURA KING
WWW.SUMMITPRESS.NET

PREPARING FOR SURGERY

Whether you are opting to have surgery or you were told that it's absolutely necessary for your survival, there are plenty of things you can do to prepare. Of course, they are contingent upon the amount of time you have prior to your surgery. But you can at the very least commit to your surgery mentally, and hypnosis can help you with that even if you have as little as 24 hours.

Feelings of fear and nervousness are perfectly normal in this situation. After all, though you may be in the most able hands surgically, you still don't know—no one knows—exactly what is going to happen in the operating room. And if you add to that the likelihood that you will experience post-surgery pain, there is plenty to be unnerved about.

As I discussed earlier, many emotions experienced during a major illness stem from not knowing what's ahead. Therefore, researching your condition, your type of surgery, and your team will go a long way toward making you feel more confident about your surgery, whether it's elective or not. And as I also discussed earlier, getting your body into the best shape it can be in is always a good idea, as that will help your recovery. The stronger and healthier you are going in to surgery, the faster and easier your recovery is likely to be. Of course, getting plenty of restful sleep and managing your stress level is important, particularly because chronic stress impedes recovery. The amount of preparation you're able to do obviously depends on the amount of time you have available and the way you prioritize your time. However, if you ever want to know what your priority is, simply look at what you're doing at any moment. What you're doing tells the world what's important to you. Though many people technically have adequate time to do all kinds of preparation, their priorities are elsewhere so they don't prepare. Meanwhile, if you asked them, they'd likely say they didn't have time to prepare.

I mention this—and I earlier alluded to having as little as 24 hours to prepare (or even less!)—because I believe that the less time you have to prepare, the more important relaxation and self-hypnosis become. Changing the way you work out or eat or sleep, or the supplements you take, will make little difference tomorrow. Those are steps you take that demonstrate their effectiveness best over time. But you can change how you feel—you can change your relationship to your surgery—overnight. And the best way to do that is through self-hypnosis. Naturally, the more sessions you're able to squeeze in the better, but relaxation and a positive mental state are so important that most major medical centers offer guidance in relaxation and positive mental imagery

in addition to counseling on nutrition and exercise. Preparing for surgery also includes preparation for going home to recover. If your home needs to be customized in any way for the condition you will likely be in, you certainly don't need the stress of doing any of that work after your surgery. You might not even be physically able to do any of that work. Enlist family members, friends, and co-workers as soon as you find out that your home might need some adjustments.

Some people don't get to the point of having to prepare for surgery because they have such a powerful block against the idea of the surgery. This is particularly the case for people who need back, shoulder, or neck surgery for pain and discomfort, but who don't have a life-threatening illness. They know that their recovery will be long, difficult, and likely painful, and they figure that considering they're already in pain and have difficulty moving, the devil they know is better than the devil they don't know.

Andrew needed shoulder surgery for years due to decades of playing golf and baseball. He had grown accustomed to the pain he was in and the tilt in his posture, and had stopped playing golf and baseball and simply replaced them with other hobbies. He knew that the surgery he needed would involve months of painful recovery, including physical therapy several times a week. He convinced himself that his post-surgery pain and inconvenience could very well be worse than his current—and deteriorating—condition, and he refused to go ahead with the procedure. I hypnotized him to stop obsessing over the short-term negatives that came with the recovery process, and instead to look forward to the long-term benefits of being pain free and having his movement back. I also reminded him that his condition, if left untreated, would only get worse over time, and that meant more discomfort, inconvenience, and limitation in movement and activity. After three sessions, Andrew scheduled his surgery, and with the help of CDs to prepare him for surgery and help his recovery, he was back on the golf course six weeks earlier than his doctors had anticipated.

Pre-Surgery Hypnosis

Pre-surgery hypnosis has been shown to help patients remain relatively pain free (as compared to patients weren't hypnotized), in addition to them requesting and receiving half the pain medication (Lang et al., 2000). Hypnosis prior to surgery has also been found to lead to reduced anxiety and faster recovery (Faymonville et al., 1998). A frequently cited study of breast cancer surgery patients (Montgomery et al., 2007) showed pre-surgery hypnosis to be most beneficial. It decreased the need for pain medication, it decreased the intensity of pain, it decreased nausea, and it also decreased fatigue and emotional upset. The cost for the institution was also significantly less, mainly due to reduced surgical time.

Jim, 58, desperately needed hip replacement surgery, but was afraid of all of the procedures involved in the surgery and refused to consider it. His mind settled on the story that between

anesthesia, getting cut open, getting stitched up (and having huge scars), and having to recover, there were numerous ways he might end up dead or ill. I gave him my Preparing Your Mind for Surgery CD, and three weeks later he felt comfortable enough to schedule a pre-op appointment. While at that appointment, his doctor discovered a blockage in one of his arteries that needed to be operated on immediately. He ended up having two major surgeries in one year—while regularly listening to my CD—and his recovery times for both surgeries were, according to his doctors, half of what he should have expected.

After Surgery

If you haven't been told what to expect after surgery, ask questions and make sure you either record the answers or have someone else take notes. Knowing what to expect after surgery is as important as knowing what to expect beforehand. Pain is an inevitable part of surgery. Pain is the body's way of sending a warning to the brain that it has been damaged and needs attention. Although a normal reaction to surgery, pain can interfere with recovery by increasing stress, preventing restful sleep from occurring, and affecting mood.

Pre- and post-surgery preparation are not just medical and physical, they're mental. And proper preparation leads to a less painful experience and quicker recovery time. The following session teaches the relaxation and positive imagery techniques that can help you before, during, and after surgery.

Preparing for Surgery

Instructions:

1. Read each night, before retiring, for 21 nights. Read aloud, with feeling, using the word you chose earlier to replace the longer version of Alpha Conditioning.
2. Proceed immediately to the script for Preparing for Surgery.

S	M	T	W	TH	F	Sat

From this moment on, each and every time I desire to attain the deepstate of total relaxation, I am instantly and fully relaxed, as I am now drifting into the Alpha state of consciousness. The moment I think my chosen word,___, Alpha occurs. This word has an effect only when I use it and only under the proper circumstances. Each and every time I do use it I am fully prepared to receive positive, beneficial, and constructive suggestions, impressing each one deeper into the storage and memory facility of my brain.

I feel relaxed and comfortable in every way for my surgery. I imagine my body relaxed. The more relaxed I am, the better prepared I am for surgery. I know I am being closely observed by skilled doctors . . . and I can safely relax. The anesthesia is administered carefully and safely. The more relaxed I am . . . the less amount of anesthesia I need for the surgery. And this is good for me . . . I know that my operation will be performed skillfully . . . and my body's protective system remains active. My body cooperates with the surgeon.

Now, I am going to choose an image which, when I think of it, brings me feelings of complete love. I choose an image that brings me great feelings of love. I focus only on this one image. I remember this image that I am thinking of and I take note of what colors are in this image. I remember the setting . . . I remember the objects in this image . . . I remember the noises or smells in this picture of love. I focus on each and every detail of this image.

This is the image that I will focus on before surgery, when entering surgery, during surgery, as well as after. I easily remember all of the vivid details of this image . . . and it is so simple for me to quickly recover this image in my thoughts. As soon as this image enters my thoughts, bursts of love surround me. Love creates harmony and healing. When I think of this image, my body heals without hesitation.

Being calm and loving myself unconditionally are the two keys to having a successful surgery and a productive recovery. My immune system is most productive when I love myself and when I am relaxed and at ease. I release any and all thoughts that are useless and counterproductive. The only thoughts I should be having are those of confidence, self-love, self-respect, and admiration for my body's ability to heal. I am at ease with myself and my body. Peace is mine . . . relaxation is something that I do best. When I think about my upcoming surgery, I am confident in my body's ability to be healthy and productive in its healing process.

As I prepare for surgery, I recall the special image that brings me feelings of love. This image makes me feel calm and complete. As I recall this image, and the details of this image, I approach my surgery experience with a very positive attitude. This image that brings me confidence also reminds me that my body has an endless ability to heal. It is easy for my mind to relax.

My body is a perfect self-healing mechanism. All my chemical levels, blood pressure, blood sugar, blood cells, nerves, muscles, immune system and every other functioning feature of my body will now come into balance and operate appropriately and in harmony with all other systems of my body. My body will heal itself perfectly and my subconscious will work to keep me healthy always. I will be able to resume my life in an appropriate time frame, and my life will bring me great success and happiness.

Now . . . I focus on the way my body is to behave after surgery. When I awaken after surgery, I awaken peacefully as though waking from a long, peaceful, healthy, restoring sleep. When I

come out of the anesthesia, I focus on alerting my defense system to promote healing. My natural body processes are functioning normally.

I concentrate on a rapid return to normal function, to a stable and comfortable blood pressure. I imagine getting back to a healthy, happy lifestyle as my body heals. As my body heals, I feel myself getting hungry, feeling thirsty. I think about getting back to a healthy lifestyle as my body heals.

Every time I sleep, my body heals and restores itself. Energy flows appropriately through all parts of my body at all times. After surgery my body automatically heals itself. My immune system and all other functions of my body operate ideally. All the healthy cells in my body are now perfecting themselves and operating towards the highest good for my body. All the systems in my body now operate in balance and harmony.

As I sit or lie here more comfortable with each second . . . more relaxed . . .

. I imagine in my mind the color orange. Orange increases oxygen supply to the brain and stimulates mental activity. Orange is associated with healthy food and it stimulates appetite. It is bright and fun and cheery and puts me in a positive mood. Every time I see or even think of the color orange, I feel healthy and sharp. Orange makes me feel great about myself. Orange in any form, real or imagined, is my key to dynamic health. Any time I see the color orange, in and out of my conscious awareness, it automatically doubles everything I am telling myself for health in my subconscious mind.

My mind is balanced, renewed and strengthened. And every time I read this, I automatically go deeper and am more relaxed, and I automatically double this session in my subconscious mind. You now have the choice to either awaken or to drift off into a normal, natural sleep. If you are going to awaken, say:

Twenty minutes. Wide awake.

If you are going to drift off into a normal, natural sleep, say:

I am now going to drift off into a normal, natural sleep. When I awaken, I will feel fully rested, calm, and at peace with myself, the world, and those around me.