

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some of the questions I'm commonly asked. If you have any query that is not listed here, please don't hesitate to contact me!

What exactly happens during hypnosis?

Much of the session will involve us talking to each other. In the first session we will discuss your reason for coming and I will listen and ask questions. In subsequent sessions we will discuss how you have gotten on since we last met. When it is appropriate for us to use hypnosis, I will start by explaining to you that you will always remain in control and that you will hear everything I say, and will be able to remember everything you choose to remember. It is important for you to understand that you are in control and that we will always be working as a team.

When using hypnosis, all I will do is speak to you in a relaxing tone of voice using words designed to guide you into your own hypnotic state, usually referred to as a 'trance'. Once you are relaxed, I simply continue talking to you, using positive suggestions and techniques we have agreed upon, to help you make the changes we have discussed. Hypnotherapy is a gentle process and you cannot be hypnotised unless you are willing. You can even hypnotise yourself which I will show you how to do. In fact, because you can't be hypnotised unless you want to be, all hypnosis is really self-hypnosis. I should say here that it took me a while to get comfortable with the word 'trance' too as it conjured up all kinds of images and expectations. But really, it is just the word most commonly used to describe the hypnotic state that we flit in and out of throughout the day from waking and drifting in the morning, to moments of daydreaming and reminiscing.

What does a hypnotic trance feel like?

You can probably answer this yourself as we all tend to go in and out of trance all the time. Have you ever driven or walked home and been so lost in your thoughts so that once home you couldn't remember the journey? Have you ever daydreamed? What about that dozey feeling in the morning, or going to sleep, when you know what is going on around you but drift in and out of dreamy images and feelings? Have you ever been lost in a good book? All of these are experiences of trance and during all of them, your conscious mind has calmed and become less dominant for a short while.

But actually, everybody's experience of trance is different. Some people feel very drifty and relaxed and others will feel quite alert and very aware. And neither is the 'right' way to feel. Sometimes it is desirable to utilise an alert trance and other times relaxation works best. Your experience will be your own and is therefore the right one for you for now. Whatever your mind does however, your body will enter a sleepy state and your breathing will calm and while you could get up and move, you will probably feel like you can't be bothered and this feeling is usually the key.

Although you may be deeply relaxed you will always be aware of what is going on and you will be able to relate to what I am saying. You can talk, move and even come out of the hypnotic trance if you really want to as you are in control at all times.

Can everybody be hypnotised?

It is understood that about 90% of people can achieve a light trance state and really, anybody who wants to be hypnotised, can be. If you are able to imagine someone's face, or if you ever find yourself daydreaming or have ever been lost in a book or movie, then you can be hypnotised.

It is true that we can experience different depths of trance and some can go very deep, while others will stay in a light trance, but this is mainly up to you and what you are ready for. And even this can differ with our mood and frame of mind. You know how some nights you sleep better than others? Trance can be a little like this. You will probably find that your trance deepens with time and practise as you become more and more comfortable and trusting of yourself.

But this is where it is important to explain again that everyone's experience of hypnosis is different. Some will feel very drifty with their conscious mind very calmed, and others will feel quite consciously aware throughout. Either way is fine though as most therapeutic work only needs a light trance and your unconscious mind is always listening anyway. If your hypnotic experience is different to what you expected, you can always ask questions.

Remember that your therapy is a team effort with two people working as equals to help you make the changes you want.

How long will it take you to “fix” me?

I'm glad you have asked this as I need to be very clear that I won't be 'fixing' you. I remember thinking years ago that hypnotherapy would mean someone would switch me off, 'go in, do the job', and come out again and that it wouldn't really involve me at all. And it's really not like that as despite what the stage shows look like, the hypnotherapist doesn't have this kind of control and there is no 'magic' involved.

All the changing and 'fixing' is done by you and I simply facilitate the process by enabling you to get in touch with your own answers and solutions. All hypnosis is really self-hypnosis.

Basically, if you are motivated to resolve what you have come for, you may make your changes quickly and the work will be straightforward. If you know there are changes you want to make but aren't sure what they are then we can work together to find out what you need. And, importantly, if you feel you are motivated but can't quite seem to make the changes you want, we can explore the reasons for this together. The main thing to remember about hypnotherapy is that it enables us to bypass our conscious mind and our ego's so that we don't get on our own way quite so much.

There are a number of ways we can work together and this will depend upon your needs. Again though, I don't fix you. All the changes made are yours, and you can feel proud of this.

Can I check your qualifications?

Yes you can, and you should. I am an Associate member of the *British Society of Clinical Hypnosis* ([BSCH](#)) and you can search for my name on their website by clicking on "Finding a Hypnotherapist" at the bottom of the page.

My qualifications are:

- o **Certificate in Clinical Hypnosis** with the [LCCH](#) (pre-requisite to Diploma)
 - o **Diploma in Clinical Hypnosis** with the [LCCH](#) (D.Hyp)
 - o **Associate Member** of the [British Society of Clinical Hypnosis](#)
- As a member of the BSCH I am fully insured and am willingly bound by their Code of Ethics which can also be found on their website. The Code of Ethics is designed to ensure both your safety and mine and by following the code, I will always act with the best interests of my clients in mind.
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How is hypnotherapy different from what they do on TV?

On the TV it looks as though the hypnotist has control over the person he is talking to. After all, how else would they get them to eat onions and dance around? But actually they are not.

Firstly, they are usually careful to choose people who are likely to go into trance very easily and 'test' the audience before allowing them on stage.

Secondly, the people going on stage usually have a fair amount of natural exhibitionism and while one weekend they may say "I ate an onion because I was hypnotised", the next weekend they may say "I ate an onion because I had too much to drink".

But all participants in a stage show could choose to come out of trance any time they wanted to and say "thanks all the same, but I've already had an onion today". They don't tend to show those bits though.

While the principles are the same in all hypnosis, hypnotherapy is very different because of the intention behind it. With hypnotherapy the intention is to assist others in making the changes they want for themselves and with appropriate training and understanding, this is done in a safe way with the therapist and client working together.

Why should I choose hypnotherapy over another kind of therapy?

If hypnotherapy doesn't feel right to you, you shouldn't. But the benefit of hypnotherapy is that it can help you get more directly to the creative and resourceful part of your mind, your unconscious mind, which is often the source of our problems and our solutions.

If trained by a reputable body such as the *London College of Clinical Hypnosis* ([LCCH](#)), hypnotherapists are trained in the psychological theory upon which many other therapy styles are based. But with hypnotherapy we have a very effective tool with which to bypass our "ego's" and to apply those theories.

If we liken ourselves to a garden, Hypnotherapy is like having a good understanding of what is needed to make the garden grow, and also having the tools needed to gently turn the soil so the flowers can grow faster, and the weeds are less likely to come back.

What if I don't like you when I meet you?

This is a really good question as no matter what kind of therapy you decide to go for, the most important part of it is that you trust the therapist and feel safe.

While this is less of an issue for one-session treatments like stopping smoking, it is probably the most important consideration for longer term work. Having had therapy myself, I know how important the trust is and that this can take a little time to build.

During your first session, we will spend quite a while talking and this will give you the chance to check me out. If you don't feel a good sense of comfort, you can either express your concerns to me which I will understand and which we can chat about, or you can choose not to return. And either is ok.

How will I know if it has worked?

This depends on what you wanted hypnotherapy for. If you have come for help to stop smoking or to lose weight, it will be very obvious when it works.

If you have come with something deeper e.g. for help with low self-esteem, it is less black and white and so it is not as easy to measure when it is working.

To help us out with this, we will get clear on your 'goals for therapy' so that we have something to measure things against. Then we will chat about your progress each session. I can say however, if you do not feel some improvement after 3 sessions, sack me!

Will I tell you all my secrets because I'm in trance?

No. As described before, you will be aware of your choices and aware of what is around you when in trance and you won't say or do anything you haven't chosen to say or do.

You may be surprised by some of the things you find out or say but this is only because your unconscious mind knows more than you do. Your unconscious mind is always protecting you and working on your behalf.

Is what I tell you confidential?

Yes. All information you share is treated as confidential and your contact details are never passed to others, leased or sold to any canvassing companies.

However, as will be explained during your first session, should you tell me anything which indicates that you are a potential harm to yourself or to another, I am legally obliged to act upon the information. This would always be discussed with you prior to any action.

Also, if you are coming for more than one session, I may discuss your case with my clinical supervisor or co-counsellor. You can trust that no names or contact details would be shared at any time, but clinical supervision is good practise and is necessary under membership to the British Society of Clinical Hypnosis. It is intended to ensure professional conduct at all times.

Finally, while your contact details are never passed to another, I will ask you if you would like to put on my email list as I also deliver courses which may be interest to you. You are of course welcome to say no this invitation.

Will I stay in control of myself?

The answer is yes. You will stay in control of yourself, but depending on what you have come for, and as your trust grows, there may be times where you feel emotional, which is usually beneficial and can be part of the process.

At all times though you are aware of what is happening and your unconscious mind is on your side and is looking out for you. So the answer is yes, you are always in control of yourself and you will experience whatever it is that you know you need for now.

What if I don't wake up?

This can't happen. No-one has ever got 'stuck' in hypnosis. Have you ever been properly stuck in a daydream? Hypnosis is a natural state that you go into every day and so your mind knows how to deal with it.

Even if for some reason the therapist didn't carry out an 'awakening' process, you would gradually become aware of your surroundings and you would waken naturally. When you leave the session you will be bright and alert and totally out of trance, able to drive and will probably feel lovely.

How long will a session last?

The first session will last 1.5 hours. This allows time for us to discuss why you have come, to get to know each other a little, give you an experience of hypnosis and to ask questions. After this, sessions usually last for 1 hour.

If you are coming for a one-session treatment e.g. to stop smoking, the session would last for 1.5 hours.

How often will I need to come?

This depends on what you're coming for and also on your finances. If you are coming to stop smoking, it should take only one-session. Otherwise, we will chat about your reasons for coming and this will make it possible to estimate how many sessions may be needed.

Estimations of how many sessions different symptoms might need is given in the [Common Symptoms](#) page under "[About Hypnotherapy](#)".

How much does it cost?

The first session lasts for 1.5 hours and costs £60. This includes a self-hypnosis CD which costs £10 when bought on its own. After this, sessions cost £50 per hour.

The one-session Stop-Smoking treatment costs £75 and also includes a Self-hypnosis CD.

How do I make an appointment?

You can make an appointment, or ask for more information, by emailing nicky.spencer@sycamorehypnotherapy.com or by calling 01467 681695 (landline), or 07921 513955 (mobile).

What happens if I need to cancel an appointment?

In order to allow me time to give the session time to another client, please provide 24 hours notice of cancellation.

What happens if I miss an appointment?

Because the session could have been given to another client, I charge a late cancellation fee of half the session cost. Enforcement of this policy may depend upon your circumstance but I would really appreciate your help and consideration in making sure appointments are met, or cancelled with plenty of notice.

Why do you ask me about my medical history?

If you suffer from **Epilepsy** or have a history of Epilepsy I will be unable to work with you using hypnotherapy and will refer you to the [BACP](#) website to find an appropriate therapeutic approach for your needs.

If you are currently suffering from **Clinical Depression**, I have to ask you to inform your GP that you are coming for hypnotherapy prior to your first session.

If you are taking any **medication** related to the issue you are coming with, please continue with the course of medicine as prescribed by your GP and inform your GP you are coming for hypnotherapy.
