

How to write a Hypnosis Script

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Tutorial: How to write a hypnosis script

Writing a hypnosis script is not difficult. But it needs thought and care, and an understanding of hypnosis theory. When writing a script you need to follow a plan that will ensure that the direct and indirect suggestions you use are effective.

Writing a hypnotherapy script can be simple or complex: the script may use embedded commands, hypnotic words, analogical marking, multi-level metaphors and guided visualisation and many other hypnosis techniques. However, no matter how long the script needs to be or how complicated it is, underneath it all, writing a new script is a simple exercise in logic.

General structure of a script

Hypnotherapy is all about images and language. The exact words are not important but the structure of the script is. Every word used in therapy has to be there for a reason. Good hypnotherapy is based on good science. If you cannot state specifically why you are saying these particular words then you shouldn't be saying them: you might as well recite the telephone directory.

The basic structure of a hypnotherapy session is:

Standard Session Plan

- Problem definition
- Induction
- Therapy

Reorientation

Problem Definition

Defining the problem is the most critical of the therapist's skills but it is not dealt with here. Bad hypnotists apply the same script to everyone - and then are surprised when they don't get results. Scripts have to be designed individually to address the particular problems and resources of each client. Clients frequently tell you their problem is one thing, but when you talk to them it turns out to be something quite different. Therefore identifying the actual problem is the first stage.

Induction

Inductions are generally simple and standard. The induction may be preceded by a test for susceptibility and a test for preferred representational style. (The induction will need to be reworded if the client turns out to be unable to visualise, for example). The induction process usually involves a combination of induction suggestions, one or more deepeners and one or more tests for depth of trance. For examples see the section on inductions and deepeners in this collection. Most published therapy scripts omit the induction section because each therapist will usually use their one or two favourite induction routines with every client.

Induction Section

- Develop Rapport
- Note Representational Style
- Susceptibility test (optional)
- Induction
- Deepener(s)
- Depth Test(s) - Essential

Therapy

The therapy section depends on the nature of the client's problem. Therapy can be based around Regression, or Parts Therapy, or Metaphor or Guided Visualisation or any combination of these techniques and more. For a standard session, (if there is such a thing!) the following structure could be expected.

Therapy Section

- Accepting Change
- New Ways of thinking
- Reconnection to resources
- New Capability Beliefs
- New Identity Beliefs
- Self Esteem Building
- Deletion of Old Beliefs
- Reinforcement of hypnotic message

Reorientation

After the therapy the client has to be brought back to the present and left alert and clear headed. Most therapists have a favourite style that they always use so most published scripts do not detail the reorientation text.

Developing a hypnosis script for Nail Biting

The next part shows how to write an original hypnosis script.

The basic logic is:

First identify the exact problem as the client experiences it, then create a block outline for the hypnosis script, then identify the client's assumptions and resources, and finally tailor the hypnotic words and phrases to suit the particular client.

The exact transcript of the live session is given later in this section to show how an experienced therapist created an original and unique script based on the block outline.

The following sections describe how I created an original Nail Biting hypnosis script for a client I had never met. All I knew about him was that on the telephone he told me he wanted to deal with a Nail Biting problem.

The first thing to consider when thinking about changing a behaviour with hypnosis is whether the behaviour is triggered by a specific situation, or whether it is a chronic problem that seems to be in operation all the time. The two different types of problem require different approaches. Nail biting has a bit of both. Nail biting is a conditioned behaviour originally triggered by stress, but now maintained and reinforced by constant repetition. The client is usually doing the biting or chewing with no conscious awareness of how or when the behaviour started. The basic purpose of the Nail Biting script therefore is to make the client more aware of what their hands are doing, so that they can interrupt the cycle, and to increase the client's awareness of what their hands should look like as a constant reminder to them (see the Cycle of Behaviour page for an overview of behaviour triggers). Parts of the script also address issues of self esteem, expectations of success, and embarrassment about appearance.

Writing a hypnosis script consists of four stages:

1. Deciding on the areas to target
2. Designing the Block Outline
3. Identifying Unique Resources and Beliefs
4. Wording the Direct and Indirect suggestions

Deciding the areas to target

What needs to change?

The first step is to consider what behaviours are to be targeted, and what beliefs need to be changed to ensure that the new behaviour sticks. With nail biting the source of the stress is far in the past, and may in fact have disappeared long ago. There is no point in seeking the original source of the stress. What needs to be done is to deal with the consequences.

What is maintaining the negative behaviour?

The second step is to consider what might be maintaining the behaviour. Any behaviour that is causing distress but which is still going on must be getting rewarded in some way. In Nail Biting the reward is a distraction behaviour that gives the impression of control, control of the stress. It is likely that the subconscious thought along the lines of "I can't control the events around me, but I can get some comfort from putting my fingers in my mouth". It is only short step from there to nail biting, then to an association that biting the nails is how to respond to stressful situations. This belief must be eliminated or the behaviour will start again the next time a stressful situation is encountered.

What resources does the client have?

The third step is to consider what resources the client has that can be utilised to help in eliminating the problem. The client typically has tried to stop biting their nails and couldn't, so there is a history of failure. This belief needs to be replaced by a belief in their ability to change, and to be successful. Each client is different and brings different strengths with them. Before meeting the client you can only use strengths that all clients can be expected to have - memories of past successes, and evidence of personal control in some aspects of their behaviour. These would then be magnified and expanded to reconnect with lost resources.

How does the client represent their problem?

Each client will experience their problem in a unique way, but people are similar enough to be able to predict how common problems present themselves mentally. In this case the client probably has an image of bleeding, ugly, useless nails that are a constant embarrassment.

This needs to be changed to something positive. Guided visualisation will ensure that the old images are replaced by attractive images.

The client probably feels bad about their nails, their fingers and their hands in general. The script needs to make the client feel good about them again.

Block outline for a hypnosis script

Creating the Block Outline

Before he arrived I blocked out a script outline for the nail biting script, this defines the sections to be covered, each aimed at one particular aspect of the problem. (These are shown below in boxes).

Induction

Use a standard induction
AIM: achieve trance state

Pacing

Validate the problem
Empathise with the client

AIM: Communicate Rapport and Respect

Recall past successes

Call up past successes
Experience the feeling of success
 Party Visualisation
 Blessings of important people

Anchor that feeling

AIM: IDENTITY - Self Esteem
AIM: CAPABILITY - "you can change"

Recall control experiences

Call up past control instances
Connect to the feeling of control
Emphasize personal control

AIM: IDENTITY - " you are in control"

Visualisations

Various ENVIRONMENTS
In a Group
Respect of friends
Pointing and Gesticulating

Manipulating Things
Picking up coins, thread, sticky tape
Holding a glass

Focus on Hands
Buying a watch, rings
Playing cards
Using nailfile, cleaning

AIM: BEHAVIOUR - situation specific stimuli
AIM: IDENTITY - "you deserve good nails"
AIM: FUTURE - you enjoy using hands
AIM: MEMORY - positive associations

Mountain metaphor

Strength, Power
Inevitability

AIM: CAPABILITY - Inevitable Outcome
AIM: PHS - Reminder of Strength

Pleasure and pride

Direct Suggestion
Indirect Suggestion

AIM: IDENTITY - Self Esteem
AIM: CAPABILITY - "You can succeed"
AIM: EVALUATION - Positive outcomes
AIM: RESPONSE - Feel good about self

Post hypnotic suggestions

Moving Hand looks huge
Like bunch of bananas boxing glove
Taste aversion

Finger tastes revolting
Hands are unhygienic

Muscular distortion

Irresistible Force forces hand down
Finger feels huge in the mouth

Alternate Behaviour

Deep Breathing
Release tension

Automatic Reward

Rush of good feelings
Reminder of pride

AIM: SENSORY DISTORTION: alter
Vision, taste, touch, muscular, emotion

AIM: STIMULUS - Awareness of hand

AIM: RESPONSE - Positive Feelings

AIM: REPERTOIRE - Replacement Behaviour

Summary and restatement

Direct Suggestions
Suggestion Repetitions

AIM: IDENTITY - Valuable Person

AIM: CAPABILITY - "You can succeed"

AIM: REPERTOIRE - New replacement actions

AIM: MEMORY - Reconnect to successes

Self convincer

Get client to commit to the change

AIM: IDENTITY - New Person

AIM: CAPABILITY - "Convinced I can do it"

Reorientation

Identifying Beliefs and Resources

The Block Outline is a general purpose solution to a generic problem. Once I actually met the client I got him to describe how he experienced his problem and I made a note of any resources he mentioned and any beliefs he expressed about his problem.

Nail biting is a common problem that is easily treated with hypnosis. Even though the problem is common, hypnosis will work better if it is tailored to fit the exact experience of each client. Everyone experiences their problem in their own unique way. This part of the tutorial shows how to identify beliefs and resources

In order to understand the behaviour of nail biting it is necessary to identify how the client experiences the problem, and to find out what resources and barriers the client has. This

checklist of questions is used to prompt the therapist and helps to reveal why, when and how the client bites or chews their nails. It may also identify resources the client has that can be used against the nail biting habit. These answers provide a set of precise targets and resources unique to the client that can be used during hypnosis.

Nail biting: Resources	
	<i>Target Area</i>
<i>HISTORY of NAIL BITING</i>	
When did you start?	Memory, Situation
Why did you start?	Beliefs
How often do you do it?	Behaviour
<i>CURRENT PATTERNS OF NAIL BITING</i>	
When do you bite or chew your nails?	Triggers, Situations
What do you like about it?	Belief
What do other people think about your nail biting?	Peer pressure resources
How do you know when to start and when to stop?	Environment, Triggers
<i>RESTARTING</i>	
Have you ever tried to give up?	Motivation
Why did you stop?	Motivation
How did you stop?	Resource
How long did you stop for?	Resource
Why did you restart?	Triggers & Situation
<i>RESOURCES</i>	
Personal Experience - stopping	Capability
What have you tried?	Resource
Other people's experience	Resource
What is the worst thing about nail biting?	Beliefs
Will other people support you to stop?	Resource
<i>BELIEFS ABOUT NAIL BITING</i>	
Why do you do it?	Identity, Beliefs
Why don't you just stop?	Identity, Beliefs
What do you think when you see other people nail biting?	Beliefs
Is there anything would stop you stopping?	Beliefs
<i>MOTIVATION</i>	
Why do you want to stop now?	Beliefs, negative & positive
How do you know you can stop now?	Capability
What will others think when you stop?	Resource
<i>BEHAVIOUR AFTER STOPPING</i>	

What will be different when you stop?	Capability, Rewards
What will you be able to do when you stop?	Visualisation, Capability
What will other people say when you stop?	Resource
What will your nails look like when you stop?	Visualisation
What are you going to do instead of nail biting?	Alternative behaviours
What will be the biggest benefit?	Motivation Resource

The therapist would not normally ask all these questions directly. Most of the information will be provided when the client describes how they experience their problem. The check list is just to ensure that no potentially useful areas are missed.

As well as being a source of information for the therapist, the constant reiteration of '*How will you stop, when will you stop, what will people think when you stop*' etc. works on the client by priming the subconscious mind to think about stopping even before the session begins.

The Behaviour After Stopping section is important. Most clients with long term habits have never actually thought about not doing the behaviour, and have no clear images of what they would be like without it. They are unlikely to offer this information unprompted, so any time spent in this section will put positive images into their mind which can be used as a resource once the session starts. You can create a similar resources checklist for any client problem.

Wording the Suggestions

The block outline and the personalised resources checklist form the basis for the therapy. The wording of the therapy is similar for each class of problem, but unique for each client. The session consisted of hypnotising the client, then creating specific suggestions without referring to any written material other than the outline. The outline gives structure to the session and when reaching the relevant block, specific wordings were created to match the client's personal outlook and resources.

When the client comes for hypnotherapy each part of the hypnosis Nail Biting script, each section, will be worded as phrases aimed at particular core beliefs, or particular parts of the behaviour cycle, or aspects of the client's representation of the world. Each phrase will mainly address one element and use one hypnotic technique, although these can be woven into statements of any degree of complexity and may be embedded within visualisations or metaphors. But it should always be possible to identify which part of the client's core beliefs any particular phrase is aimed at.

Aiming the Suggestions

All hypnotherapy is aimed at altering the client's core beliefs. In order to do so, the therapist has to first decide which belief areas to target, and which new beliefs to install. Each suggestion should be targeted at one of the four belief areas or one of the stages of the automatic behaviour cycle.

The suggestion should be worded to take advantage of one of four cognitive filters, (ways that the mind distorts information), and should use one of the main hypnotic vectors such as dissociation, reframing, post hypnotic suggestion, etc.

The previous section described how I designed an original Nail Biting hypnosis script for a client I had never met. On the telephone he told me we wanted to deal with a Nail Biting problem. He also hinted at other issues but these were unspecified.

The outline above is a general purpose solution to a generic problem. Once I actually met the client I explored how he experienced his problem and I made a note of any resources he had and any beliefs he expressed about his problem. I then used the script outline as the basis for the therapy, talking to the client without reading anything, but following the outline structure and adding specific wordings to match the client's particular experience and resources.

The Finished Nail Biting Script

This script is a transcript of the actual hypnotherapy session conducted by David Mason developed from the block outline shown previously.

The client was a man in his early twenties who would pick or bite his nails till they bled, then stop for six months or so and start again. He was a professional drummer who intended to make that his career.

The script is given with comments to explain what each statement is doing. The script follows the script outline closely and all the sections are in the original order. The only major difference was that this client proved to be highly susceptible, and showed clear signs of going into trance during the susceptibility test. The induction was therefore shortened, but depth was tested several times to make sure the client was still somnambulistic. The [mm:ss] column shows the time elapsed in minutes and seconds. This is helpful in demonstrating how slowly hypnotic suggestions are delivered, and how gaps are left between statements to allow time for the client's mind to process the statements.

What the symbols mean:

>	shows Cause and Effect linking statements of the type 'doing A leads to B'
=	shows Reframing of the type 'A is really the same as B'.
D	shows where a direct suggestion is being made.
I	shows where an indirect suggestion is being made.
M	an intentional metaphor being introduced
V	indicates where the client is invited to visualise something
K	a suggestion that generates a kinaesthetic response

Target	mm:ss	Dialogue	L	Vector
		<i>Susceptibility Test</i>		
	00:00	What I would like you to do now is to put your hands like that [<i>demonstrates palms together, hands upright</i>] now like that [<i>demonstrates clasping</i>] ... now put your fingers up like so [<i>demonstrates raising the two index fingers</i>] with a gap between them, about an inch...		Finger steeple test
	00:28	Now just look at that gap in the middle, pay attention to that gap... just allow your mind to relax.... and just look at that gap... and as you look at that gap you see those fingers are moving together ... closer and closer... that gap is reducing and those fingers are moving ... and it is completely automatic and those fingers are now touching.....		
	00:40	And those fingers are getting tighter and tighter and those fingers are pressing together more and more and more ... and those fingers are stuck together as if they are glued. And you are totally unable to get those fingers apart... you can try moving those fingers but the harder you try the more they stick together... and those fingers are totally stuck.		
	01:00	They are stuck like glue...you can't get them apart... you can try to		

		get them apart but they will not come apart those fingers are totally jammed... and those fingers will be totally jammed until I snap my fingers and say ... ONE TWO THREE [SNAP].		Client doesn't respond!
	01:10	Let them go....		
		<i>[this was supposed to be susceptibility test, but it looks like the client has gone into trance so turn it into an induction]</i>		
	01:15	That's right ... just drop your fingers... and your hands. That's fine.		
Capability	01:25	Now that was a demonstration of the power of your mind... your mind is very, very strong and you can go into hypnosis very very D quickly and easily....		prime the client for the next session.

		<i>INDUCTION SECTION</i>		
	01:40	And now I would like you take one deep breath and hold it.		
	01:45	And... just let it go..... that's good.		
	01:55	And in moment I am going to ask you to take another deep breath and hold it... This time when you let it go... let go of all the tension in your body ... let go of all the tension in your shoulders and your arms...		
	02:10	Another deep breath hold it and <u>really</u> let go... that's good.		
	02:20	And now another one and this time let go <i>all</i> the tension in your body...		
	02:30	That's good.... let it all go... and now just resume breathing normally....		
	02:43	And with each breath out ... the voice in your mind... it says.... "you are getting more relaxed" with each breath...		Self induction induction
	02:53	Deeper and deeper relaxed...		
	03:02	That's right.....		pacing
	03:10	Just allow yourself to relax totally.		pacing
	03:20	You are doing very well....		Rapport
	03:33	You don't have to do anything.... you don't have to think... you don't have to listen... you don't have to do anything particularly.... Just allow yourself to enjoy that lovely gentle feeling...		
	03:50	Allow that relaxation to go through your body		
	4:00	And now [clientname] I would like you to relax your eyes.... Really relax those little muscles around your eyes.... focus on those tiny, tiny muscles.... the ones that control your eyelids....		Modified Elman induction
	4:20	And just feel those eyes.... totally... relaxed.	D	
	04:27	Shut down hard	D	
	04:31	... as if they are glued together....	D	
	04:35	And those eyes are so relaxed you couldn't open them if you tried.	D	
	04:44	And you could try opening them... and you could be surprised at		Depth test

		the result....	
	04:52	That's right... your eyes are completely relaxed...	[no response]
	04:56	And now allow that relaxation to spread ... from your eyes... down through your cheeks.... down your neck...	Short relaxation induction
	05:06	Feel it going through your shoulders and your arms and down through your body and all the way down into your legs....	
	05:15	So that you are totally relaxed...	
	05:22	And allow yourself to enjoy that feeling... of total relaxation	

		DEEPENER SECTION	
	05:40	And I wonder if you can imagine a big old house somewhere?.....	dissociation
	05:47	... with a fence... and a big garden... and maybe there are trees....	
	05:56	... it's the sort of house that families grew up in... generations of people.... living and laughing.....	engage personal experience
	06:07	There's been weddings and christenings and funerals... and birthday parties and happy times....	engage visualisation
	06:20	...inside that house... there's a staircase....	
	06:30	And you can find yourself at the top of that staircase....	
	06:35	...and I don't know if that staircase is wood or marble... or carpet.... doesn't matter.....	all alternatives
	06:43	...and there can be a handrail...	safety
	06:48	...and you can imagine yourself beginning to go down those steps.... because at the bottom there is a door....	
	06:58	... and behind that door is a wonderful thing, for you.	anticipation, safety
	07:04	... and you can begin to go down those steps now ... and with every step you get more relaxed.... and deeper into trance	standard staircase deepener
	07:15	and so TEN going down.... deeper relaxed... and NINE deeper still.....	
	07:28	... and EIGHT.... deeper relaxed...	
	07:33	..and SEVEN... down and down...	
	07:39	.. and SIX...	
	07:44	And feel yourself sinking into that chair... wonderfully supported as if you are lying on a fleecy cloud... just allowing yourself to drift.....	dissociation
	08:00	...and FIVE.... deeper and deeper.....	
	08:03	...and FOUR down and down....	
	08:07	... and THREE....	
	08:10and TWO....	
	08:14	...and there is one step left....	

	08:21	... and when you go off that one step there is just zero....and you go through the centre of that zero.... through a black void of nothingness... you mind is completely relaxed....		
	08:42and the only thing of importance is the sound of my voice...		

DEPTH TEST SECTION				
	08:49	And in front of you there is a door...		
	09:00	What colour is that door, [clientname]?		Depth test
	09:02	<i>White.</i>		
	09:04	It's white.		
	09:08	And what else about that door?		
	09:12	<i>It's got a lock on the front....</i>		
	09:15	Uhuh		
	09:20	<i>[indistinct]</i>		
	09:22	Uhuh		
	09:27	And does that door open inwards or outwards?		
	09:31	<i>Out</i>		
	09:32	It opens outwards.		
	09:35	And you can open that door, can't you?		safety test
	09:36	<i>Uhuh.</i>		

SELF ESTEEM SECTION				
	09:42	So, now I would like you to open that door, and go through it. And inside you find yourself inside a large room..... and there are people in that room.		
	10:00	There are all the people you know in that room.... and all the people who know you ... and they are all smiling and looking at you... and as you walk in the room they all begin to applaud politely... and they start talking to each other ... and as you go in you meet one group and another group... and your family is there.... and people from school ... and people you met socially ... and there are people who moved away and people you haven't seen for years... and everyone who loves you is there...and everyone that you love is there... And that room is filled with love and affection...and acceptance...		Visualisation
	10:55	And underneath it all there is a deep and abiding feeling of calm and you begin to flow and float into that feeling of calm...		dissociation
Capability	11:15	And you begin to feel... that there is no need for any tension or anxiety... that there are things you can leave behind.... things you don't need any more... because so many people love you and respect you and maybe they don't say so ... but they really do...	>	indirect suggestion
Identity	11:45	And as you walk around that room you hear .. people talking in the distance.... people talking to each other... and you hear someone		Validate the client's self

		saying.... <i>"that [clientname] is so adventurous, he is going to [placename]. Did you know that?"</i> . And someone replies <i>"Yes! And he is going to be a star musician. His performance is outstanding".... "He doesn't give himself credit. He is really good"</i> .		belief
Capability	12:20	And further over... someone else is saying <i>"I think [clientname] has a great future ahead of him. I think that young man can go so far...and be anything he wants to be.... do anything he wants.... because he is capable....and he is competent.... and he has such a focus... that he knows where he is going now...you watch that young man.... in a few years you will see his name everywhere"...</i>		Indirect validation of client's life and choices.
Identity	12:58	And further along you hear someone else talking... and they are saying.... <i>"I am so proud of [clientname] ... I have always been proud of him... but now he has just excelled... I couldn't have asked for a better son... he has become everything I have longed for... and maybe I didn't say it enough... but it is true.... "</i> and the other person says... <i>" yes, you are so lucky to have someone like that.... a good, decent boy.... who knows where he is going... who has picked a career for himself.... "</i> .		Self esteem - confirmation of love and acceptance from important figures
Identity	13:48	And you continue on.... feeling that acceptance of all those people.... and all their good wishes... and you reach the door in the far end of the room and you look back ... and they are all standing there... young people and old people.... they are smiling.... and they are all looking at you with such warmth and acceptance ...		Sensory distortion
Memory	14:15	and you stand in the doorway and look back....and as you do you begin to remember... each of these people... and what you remember about them is the success you had....and your life has been a series of successes. It might not have seemed like that at the time ...	D	

RECONNECTION SECTION: PAST SUCCESSES				
Capability	14:40	But you have had success after success.... there was a time you know when you couldn't tie your shoelaces. And that became a success... that was important to you... and there was time when you couldn't write ... you didn't know how to tell the difference between a D and a B.... and that was so important to that little boy....and that was a success.... and there was a time when making friends was a problem... and that became a success....		reconnect to past successes
Identity	15:13	And when you think about it, [clientname] your life has been full of successes, in fact it has been one success after another.... and I know there have been setbacks.... but you have been successful at so many things...		Reframing
Capability, Identity	15:35	And every year.... every month... a new success.... a new test passed.... a new ability.... and you have the ability to learn... it's a wonderful gift... you have the ability.... to decide to do something and when you decide to do something, <i>you do it</i> . Nothing stops you... you are a determined person... you have the ability to see	D	Repetition of "ability"

		things through...		
Behaviour	16:10	And you have come here today and you are sitting in that seat breathing quietly... because you have a problem.... and that problem comes back... but you have come here today because you have decided that that problem is over. That you are never going to have a problem with your nails again...you are never going to chew your nails again	D	Validate problem, pacing
	16:33	And this will become another one of your successes.	D	
memory	16:38	And you will be able to look back on this day ... and remember this as one of your most unexpected successes.	D	Time distortion

		CONTROL SECTION		
Capability		...another time when you demonstrated your own power, your own ability, your own competence... because you have control... you have choice in everything you do...	> D	Complex equivalence
Capability	17:02	You can choose what to wear, can't you? You can choose what you eat, can't you? You can choose where you go and who you see... and you can choose to control what your body does. You can choose to have perfect nails...	>	
Identity	17:30	Because you are in control [clientname], ...you are in total control. You have success, and ability and competence, and you have control.	D	
Identity	17:40	If you decide that something is not going to happen, then it is not going to happen. That is within your control... And you can have beautiful nails...	D	

		VISUALISATIONS SECTION		
memory	17:50	I would like you now to think of a time about a week from now ... when you look at your hands and you see your nails have been growing... and how good they look... how smart and grown up they look... and I'd like you to see yourself a month from now, when your nails are full size... strong.... long... complete... the way you want them	V	Time distortion, Visualisation
Capability	18:25	And see yourself... it might be in a bar.... might be at a gig.... standing with friends... strangers.. and you stand there and you talk with your hands and you gesticulate and you point ... and they are looking at your fingers... and they are thinking " <i>Wow, those are the fingers of a drummer</i> ". " <i>Look how well he looks after his fingers.</i> " And inside you feel a feeling of pride... accomplishment.. and that makes you feel so good.... having long strong finger nails makes you feel so good.	>	Sensory Distortion
Identity	19:05	And see yourself at a party, after a gig... something like that... and you are holding a glass... and people are looking at you and they are looking at the glass and they are seeing your hand wrapped	V	Visualisation

		around the glass... and you are seeing your hand wrapped around the glass as well.... and you have got perfect fingernails. Trimmed and neat... a man's fingernails... and the thumb too.... as you hold the glass you can see your thumb and you can see your fingers.... and they all match up and they are all perfect... just the way you want them...		
Capability	19:50	And then another time.... see yourself picking up a roll of Sellotape.... a roll of duct tape maybe.... and you run your finger around it... and your nail catches on that hard to get bit... and you just peel the duct tape off.... you just peel it right off... catch it in your fingernail... and see yourself picking up pins and coins.... peeling an orange.... easily smoothly.... and how good does that make you feel? to know that this demonstrates your control.... your ability... your competence....	V >	Visualisation
memory	20:35	Demonstrates that you have made a decision today.... that will last forever... it will last so long that there will come a time when you have forgotten all about it... you will just act naturally and normally.... and your nails will be of no interest ...	=	amnesia
identity	20:58	I wonder if you have ever played cards? ... and you can see everyone holding their cards up and you look at their nails... and you look at the nails on your left hand and your right hand ... on the table there... and you know you've got perfect nails... and a good hand... a good hand of cards.... that's three good hands!... a left hand a right hand and a hand of cards... and I wonder how good that makes you feel? Because other people's nails are sometimes not so good.... but yours are perfect now...	V D	repeating "good hands"
Identity	21:45	Now imagine you stretching both hands out in front of you... and you look at the palm and the fingers and you turn them over... and there... strong.. long nails... exactly the way they should be ... exactly the way you want them... you've got those nails now... I wonder if you can feel them growing?	V D	Visualisation, Sensory distortion

		METAPHOR SECTION		
	22:05	Because you know [clientname] nothing can stop your nails growing. Nothing can stop you doing what you want.	D	
Capability	22:20	You have come to New Zealand... And I wonder if you know that New Zealand.... the whole country... is moving towards Australia in a great geological movement ... and as that geological movement occurs... Mount Cook is being pushed up in the South Island ... that mountain is being pushed up, right now.... at the same speed that your nails are growing ...and over weeks and months that mountain gets higher and higher.... and over a lifetime that mountain gets enormously long and strong and big.... and that is how your nails are... that's how you want your nails to be... like Mount Cook.... solid, enduring.... strong.... standing out proud.... a symbol.... a symbol of what you want....		Anchor memories of the time in NZ with capability of nails. Visualisation

PRIDE IN PERSONAL APPEARANCE				
	23:25	And imagine those new hands... those new nails.... going to a jeweller's shop and having a watch fitted.... see yourself with that watch on your wrist... hear the assistant saying ..." <i>Wow ... that looks really good on you, with your hands and those nails.... that really set you off.... that is so good...</i> ".		Visualisation, Peer esteem
Identity	23:50	And see yourself among friends, just being casual... maybe you've got your hand lying on an armchair... on the arm.... and people look at your hand.... and they take no notice.... because your hand looks the same as everyone else's.... your nails are perfect, [clientname].	D	
Capability	24:20	You have chosen to take control of how your hands look. And you can choose any appearance you want.....and nothing can prevent you having that....	D	
memory	24:30	And I would like you now to remember all those occasions when you had your nails exactly the way you wanted them.... perfect... the ideal way... and really see those nails now.... see how your hands looked.... enjoy that feeling you get of pride and ability and confidence....		Reconnection
Behaviour	25:00	and see yourself in the future... with a nail file...an emery board... maybe even scissors... trimming those nails to just the right size... looking after them... making sure they are polished... just the right length....		Visualisation
Capability	25:17	And every time you hold a drumstick.... those nails wrap around inside your hand, that drumstick... and knowing you've got solid nails... makes you feel better.... makes you feel so good, so in charge....	D	Anchoring, Post hypnotic suggestion.
Identity	25:40	And knowing that you can do that gives you such a feeling of pride ... and ability... and confidence... and you know that you will never again bite your nails or chew them or... anything... that seems out of your control..... oh, you can trim them if you want to ... but only at the right time and when they are long... because you have control...	> D	

POST HYPNOTIC SUGGESTIONS SECTION				
Environment	26:00	And any time.... maybe you feel a little anxious.... maybe there is a bit of stress... And that hand begins to move up towards your mouth...		
Behaviour , capability	26:20	the hand will suddenly seem gigantic... it will look like a bunch of bananas..... that hand will grow in size and you will become aware of that hand....and as you become aware of the hand you will feel an irresistible force ... straightening your arm out... pushing it down... pushing it away from your mouth.. you will not be able to stand that force.... that force is so overwhelming... you hand will just be pushed down....and you will be back in control.	D	Sensory Distortion, Post hypnotic suggestion
Behaviour	26:56	And when that happens you will find yourself taking a deep breath	>	Provide

		... and then letting it go.... and as you let it go all that tension will disappear.... and you will feel no stress... and will feel confident.. and able.. and capable.... and competent again.....		alternative behaviour
	27:20	And by pushing that hand down... that same feeling of pride in your ability... of pride in your control will come back ... and will fill you body... will fill your chest.... it will you feel so good... and that will reinforce that feeling	>	Reward alternative behaviour
Behaviour	27:45	so that the next time that hand even begins to move towards your mouth.... you will see it as gigantic and the feeling will break in and you will instantly push the hand down again.... that irresistible force will come down and will force your hand away... until it becomes automatic and it becomes so automatic that it never occurs to you to raise your hand towards your mouth... unless you are going to eat or do something useful... but it will never again be out of your control ... you are totally in charge.	D	Sensory Distortion, Post hypnotic suggestion
Capability	28:15	And that power is in both hands now... both arms are primed and ready.... the instant that hand goes towards your mouth that feeling will force it down... and you will feel so good that you have succeeded yet again.... and you will take a deep breath and let it out slowly... and fill yourself with that feeling.... of pride and relaxation mixed.....		Reward behaviour
Environment	28:50	And any time you go into a situation where you might have chewed your nails in the past ... something inside you, some little thing happens ... that will just bubble up... like bubbles at the bottom of a lake, this little laugh will come up and you will laugh at yourself ... and that will remind you that this is a situation where you used to chew your nails and now you don't ... and that old situation was so silly .. stupid... unnecessary ... that you don't have it any more...and instead you get this little chuckle to yourself.... that tells you you are in control totally...	> D	Sensory distortion, post hypnotic suggestion
Behaviour		and that you'll never start again....and you will have... for the rest of your life... perfect total nails... and there will never come a time when you chew your nails... because chewing your nails never achieved anything...	D	Remove old belief
Environment	29:48	And if your hand were to go anywhere near your mouth... you'll begin to feel a feeling of revulsion... of dirt... if your hand is there....	D	Aversion Suggestion, Sensory distortion
		and that will last only as long as the habit... and then it will be gone... and you can still put your hand in your mouth if you are cleaning your teeth or to eat or anything else...	D	safety limit
Capability, Behaviour		but any time that hand goes up there to chew... the hand will appear gigantic.... like a boxing glove... or a banana... and the feeling in your mouth will be disgust... and your hand will just move straight down again because that arm will force it down... and as it forces it down.... once again you take a deep breath and fill yourself with relaxation and feeling good.... and remind yourself that you are in control.... totally.	D	Repeat of Aversion Suggestion, Sensory distortion
Behaviour	30:48	And a very strange thing will happen... that after you have had that		Post hypnotic

		feeling a few times... you'll lose all desire to chew your nails. You will lose all desire to do anything except to look after your nails... as if they were precious brothers and sisters.... You look after your nails...you clean them and polish them.... take pride in them... and they will just become a normal standard part of your body...		suggestion , metaphor
memory	31:18	And weeks and months and years will go by and you will never even think about them. And you will forget totally ... that you used to chew them... Because that is just a habit and that's gone now....		Post hypnotic suggestion ,

SUMMARY AND RESTATEMENT SECTION				
Capability, Behaviour, Identity	31:33	From this moment onwards.... those new things will happen ... and you will be unable to chew your nails because it will be forced down and you will become aware of it because it will look huge. and that taste will be in your mouth ... and as soon as your hand goes down the taste disappears... and your hand goes back to normal size.... and the feeling comes in, ... the feeling of feeling great... and that feeling... over time will grow more and more... and will wash out.... the little remnants of desire to chew your nails... because you know it's not any kind of solution..... It doesn't help. It's not who you are.	D	affirm new behaviour and delete old belief
Identity	32:35	Because you are a proud strong able young man.	D	
Capability	32:36	[clientname] is in control. [clientname] knows what he wants. And [clientname] wants solid strong regular nails. And now he knows how to get them.	D	
Capability	32:55	[clientname] has the ability to take over... and totally change that behaviour... so that it just doesn't occur to him... and that's pretty good... isn't it?	D	Tag Question

SELF CONVINCER				
memory	33:18	So now I would like you think back over all those successes you have had in your life.... and all those people with good wishes towards you.... and all those people who have applauded you and will applaud more in the future.		visualisation
Capability	33:35	And bring that feeling of success ... and all those good feelings from those people... and focus them now in your hands... and just feel your hands tingle... and just feel your hands.... I don't know whether you'll feel one hand tingling or heavier than the other or.... maybe one hand will move or a finger will move.... but you will know that that has happened. And you will feel a difference	D	Sensory distortion
	34:15	And when you are ready to move on [clientname] I would like you to signal by allowing your subconscious to move a finger... or a thumb and we will just go on...		Depth test
	34:30	<i>[thumb moves]</i>		
	34:31	That's fine. That's very good. That tells you that you mind has	>	Bind

		taken an irrevocable decision		
Capability	34:40	That that habit is now in the past ... that's your guarantee. You now have the mechanism to overcome this....	D >	

REORIENTATION				
Capability	34:55	So in a moment... I am going to count up from five to one, not now, but in a moment. ... And when I get to one you will come back to the present... feeling really good about yourself... and knowing that something fundamental has changed.... and knowing that today and tomorrow and in the weeks to come.... you will see or feel or hear... little things that remind you... and I don't know what they are... but they will be little things that remind you... that things are different... and every one of those little things... it could be just a feeling that you get.... a sudden flash of colour maybe.... or just a note that you didn't expect.... and that will remind you ... of everything we've said today....		Sensory discrimination
Identity	35:45	and of your determination and how you've changed.... and how easy it is... to change...	D	Bind of implication
Rule	36:00	Even long standing habits can't stand up to the power of your mind.... and your visualisation... and those abilities we've talked about....	>	
	36:10	So I am going to begin to start counting now...		
	36:15	FIVE		
	36:20	FOUR...you are beginning to get a little feeling back into your hands and feet....		
	36:23	THREE you can move your shoulders... begin to feel a little looser... taking deep breaths.... eyelids fluttering...		
	36:32	TWO getting ready for a big stretch.... and a smile, coming back to the present... eyelids fluttering... becoming aware of where you are....		
	36:39	ONE: EYES OPEN, BACK AGAIN....		
	36:43	Welcome back.		
	36:45	<i>Great! Wow. That was great.</i>		

When to use scripts

Every hypnotherapist follows a script whether they acknowledge it or not, but hypnotherapy is not about scripts. Like the director of a play or movie, the hypnotherapist uses the script to ensure that each scene occurs in the right sequence and that the words used will produce the intended effect. However, having the script of a play does not make you a director and owning a collection of hypnotherapy scripts does not make you a hypnotherapist.

Scripts are essential when learning hypnotherapy: they serve the same function as text books in a university. The students study the textbook, not because they are expected to repeat the exact words, but in order to be able to learn techniques and to model how the experts approach the subject. Good hypnotherapists collect scripts, analyse them, adapt them and develop new scripts by stealing the best ideas of others. There is no copyright on ideas.

The reason for developing a script is to provide a structure for the therapy session. Every phrase needs to be focused on the client's needs, every section carefully thought out and addressed to one specific technique. If you are using a script or developing a script you need to know exactly what each part is doing, why it does it and what the effect should be. That way you will know which parts to emphasise and which parts to skip over with particular clients. The scripts in this collection are unique and different from other published scripts in that they have columns to show what target the phrase is aimed at, and what technique is being used.

When not to use scripts

Scripts are useful but have severe limitations. For a start it is obvious to the client when the therapist is speaking freely and when the therapist is reading a script. Very few people can read aloud and make it sound natural.

If you are reading a script then you are not watching the client: the therapist needs to be acutely aware of the client's reactions at all times. A script is a fixed approach. It assumes that the client is going to be passive and take no part in the session. This is a poor approach to therapy. The client is actually signalling all the time, and the therapist needs to respond to these signals. This means that the therapist has to be flexible with every client.

In addition, sometimes clients will react unpredictably to words, ideas or images in the script and the therapist has to be ready to deal with whatever comes up. If the therapist is relying on a script then the session will terminate abruptly if there is an abreaction, or a spontaneous regression. A skilled therapist will switch to a different technique and follow wherever the client leads, smoothly blending different techniques as required. Similarly a skilled therapist will be comfortable interacting with the client via ideomotor signals, or direct speech or in guided metaphor. Scripts cannot deal with that sort of procedure.

Hypnotherapy scripts are a starting point, not the end result. They should be regarded as representing the minimum level of therapy skill: an experienced hypnotherapist should be able to include Cognitive Modelling, Behavioural Training, Metaphor Therapy, Regression and many other non-scripted techniques in any session.

Many of the scripts in this collection describe how the therapist interacts with the client. You can use these as a guide, but of course, every client will be different, and the scripts should be used to learn the general techniques rather than used exactly as they are with a different client.

How to use Key Hypnosis scripts

You should print out the scripts you are interested in and then start to change them.

When I first started doing hypnotherapy I used a clipboard that I referred to in the client's presence. If you are using a script you need to be honest with the client and explain what you are doing, there is no point in trying to hide it. The client doesn't care whether you are using a script or not.

I would talk to the client and find out what their problem was. On my clipboard I would sketch out a series of boxes, these represented the areas that I wanted to address with that client. Beside each box I would list the specific points that needed to be dealt with for that client. The structure of the therapy then followed the sequence of the boxes and the wording was designed around the points I had noted. I would show the client the boxes, and tell them what I was going to do. I would then show them the script and how each section related to one box. The client was usually impressed with my planning and preparation, and often would suggest other areas or targets to include.

Once the client is in trance, (and you should practice that without scripts until you are absolutely certain you can do it smoothly), then you have all the time you need to refer to your notes. If you need time to collect your thoughts together, just say to the client '*and take a moment now to enjoy that feeling of relaxation and go even deeper.....*', or '*now allow your mind to go over these ideas and the other things and consider how easily the changes you might want to happen can happen...*' or some such encouraging phrase.

Then look over the wording of the section of the script you want to use. Get it clear in your mind what you want to say, and then use your own words to put the idea of the section across. It doesn't matter if you stutter or hesitate or lose track, or if you have to refer back to your notes for every sentence, the client won't notice. What the client will notice is when you are reading something aloud. Your voice changes and you sound unsteady and unsure of yourself whenever you read someone else's words. It never sounds natural, and it always sounds unconvincing. The success of the therapy depends entirely on the client's subconscious mind being convinced. If you are just reading the script to the client it is obvious that you are unprepared and the unconscious mind will take that fact in along with the words.

When I was starting, before the client came in, I used to pace up and down the room reading my script aloud to hear how it sounded. I would try different accents, different tones, different loudness. If a bit didn't feel right, if it didn't flow well, then I would rewrite it or delete it. You need to feel comfortable with what you are saying. A little bit of preparation goes a long way.

Once you have the client in trance and you are going along using the script as a guide, different things will occur to you that might be useful. Add them in, say them, watch how the client reacts. If it seems OK, scribble a note in the margin so you don't forget it, and maybe it will develop into a new section. Once you begin to get proficient you will find that you can deviate from the block outline, not just the sentences, and you will be able to create whole sections out of thin air. Often these are very good, because they are coming from your unconscious mind and match the client's unconscious needs closely. It would be a pity to lose these, so I record all my sessions, and afterwards I go back and listen to the part that I thought was original, and I write these down and add them to the script. In that way, the script gradually transforms into your own unique script and becomes a natural part of your thinking, fits with your way of speaking, and eventually becomes your own unique brand of therapy.

How I use the scripts now is different. I don't need scripts much, but often I would like to be reminded of how a section goes, or the structure of a particularly effective group of

suggestions that I came up with once before. What I have now is a set of plastic covers that I keep my scripts in. These have transparent pockets for pages, so I can slip two pages in, one facing out on each side. This is the type of book used by sales people to hold brochures and things like that. You can get them from any stationer's shop. This means that I can pick up the Confidence book say, and it has all the pages of the scripts for confidence. I can then silently flip the plastic pages over till I find the section I want and refresh my memory for what I want to say next. I clip a blank page at the end so I can note down any ideas I have as I go along.

Delivering the script

When you go to the theatre, the actors don't read from their copy of the script and neither should the hypnotherapist. Only a bad hypnotherapist would read the script aloud while the client was in the room.

The hypnotherapist needs to be as familiar with the script as the actors are in a real play. With practice the actors become word perfect and don't need to refer to the script at all. Similarly, the hypnotherapist will eventually be able to recall entire scripts from memory.

However, memorising is not good hypnotherapy practice either. An actor cannot go from theatre to theatre and just repeat scenes from other plays, and a hypnotherapist cannot simply repeat the same script to each client. Equally, great work can be done when skilled actors get together and improvise, but only because their improvised words are drawn from a deep pool of experience. A script is more like a plan, a guide to follow to ensure that the therapist produces the best outcome for the audience of one. You don't actually need a written script in hypnotherapy but you do need to know where you are going and how you are going to get there. It is in that sense that every hypnotherapist follows a script, but every session is unique.

Remember: a hypnotherapy session is a conversation with the client. You are constantly interacting. You have to ask the client constantly how they are doing, what they are thinking, what they are experiencing right now. You can't do that if you are reading. It is not a public speech to a sleeping audience. Imagine how it would be if you spoke to someone on the telephone and they never said a word after 'hello'.

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