

## Autogenic Training

In simple terms, autogenic training is designed to reverse the ["fight or flight" stress response](#) with its release of [epinephrine](#) and [norepinephrine](#) in the body. Since it is slightly more complex to learn than some meditative techniques, most people find that taking a course is the easiest way to learn the technique. Schulz described *six autogenic "formulas" or "states"* as follows:

1. focus on heaviness in the arms and legs
2. focus on warmth in the arms and legs
3. focus on warmth and heaviness in the heart area
4. focus on breathing
5. focus on warmth in the abdomen
6. focus on coolness in the forehead

The first two formulas are often broken down to focus first upon the dominant arm, followed by the other arm or the legs. For each formula one repeats a phrase, or formula, silently with closed eyes such as "my arm feels heavy." Breathing is paced slowly and the phrase is repeated five to seven times before opening the eyes and stretching. A recommended practice session is three "sets" of five to seven repetitions with breaks, for a total time of about ten minutes. Practicing the technique twice daily is also recommended. Experts recommend trying to focus upon being an "alert but passive observer" of body sensations.

Each individual formula should be practiced for about a week, or until a satisfactory result is achieved. One then moves on to the next formula and practices it together with the previous ones. Once the technique has been mastered in practice sessions, it can be applied at will in situations of stress or difficulty.

### Applications

Persons with serious medical conditions should seek the advice of their physician before beginning a course in autogenic training. Autogenic training is not recommended for persons with severe psychological disturbances. One drawback of the technique is the level of time and patience required to fully master the technique. Persons who are highly motivated and show high levels of self-control are best able to learn autogenic training. Volumes of medical literature are available on the use of autogenic training in treating both mental and physical ailments.

The table below lists some of the conditions which have been improved through use of autogenic training as part of a therapeutic regimen.