



## The Relaxation Response

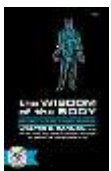
In 1975, a remarkable book entitled "The Relaxation Response" was published by Harvard cardiologist and researcher Herbert Benson, which showed in a groundbreaking way that body and mind are intensely connected and that the mind can influence health. Sixty years earlier, the physiologist Walter B. Cannon had described - among other things in his book "The wisdom of the body" - the "fight-or-flight response", which takes place in the body of mammals to prepare them for a fight with an opponent or to flee from an enemy. In this process, stress hormones are released that raise blood pressure and mobilize reserves of strength for the muscles. In order to have all the energy directed to circulation and muscles, all not necessary body processes, e.g. digestion, the immune system or clear thinking, are reduced.

For our ancestors, "fight or flight" usually ended after a short period of time. When you are healthy and a short-term stressful situation of our days is over - e.g. an argument with your boss or a sprint to catch a train - your body quickly returns to a state in which all bodily functions are harmoniously ready, depending which of them are needed. But unfortunately, due to the prevailing circumstances outside, we often are at the mercy of a permanent stress situation that makes our body constantly run in "fight-or-flight mode". This causes all kinds of stress symptoms. Take actively countermeasures and use Dr. Benson's technique and insights, which now are widely documented in mind-body medicine:

### **Relaxation alone improves heart rate, breathing and metabolism.**

How it works: Find a word or phrase that fits your belief system, e.g. "I am surrounded by love", or "The universe protects me", or "I am completely calm". If possible, go to an undisturbed place (after some practice you will be able to do this even in the middle of a crowded bus), close your eyes, breathe calmly in your own rhythm and keep saying this word or phrase to yourself in your mind. If you notice that your thoughts are wandering, go back to your focus. Be sure, even if this happens from time to time (more at first, less as you get more practice) that you are still doing everything right. Keep a passive calm attitude and don't doubt your success. Try this technique 1-2 times a day for 5-10 minutes at a time, longer if you want. Allow yourself one minute at the end before opening your eyes.

By simply trying the technique, you will see that your self-efficacy in terms of relaxation works, that you can trust it and have a positive impact on your health with this activity.



This book is in my patient library, which now comprises more than 200 books/videos on a wide range of naturopathic topics in German and English, which can be borrowed free of charge.

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