

Autogenic Training

Mind/Body Medicine



Ann Bowden

Autogenic Training at the RLHIM

27 years of audit, outcome and
research



Autogenic Training



Autogenic, meaning self-generated, refers to the homeostatic nature of the method

- a shift to the Autogenic state creates a functional situation that facilitates, activates and systematically supports the natural forces of self-regulation generated from within
- a state of altered consciousness
- a state of altered physiology
- a switch from autonomic sympathetic dominance (catabolic) to parasympathetic activity (anabolic)

rest renewal repair reflection

The Method

Training is based on three main principles:

- use of specific postures to reduce sensory input to the body and avoid distractions
- mental activity known as passive concentration
- mental repetition of a sequence of verbal formulae whilst simultaneously maintaining mental contact with various parts of the body

limbs heart area breathing abdomen forehead



Passive concentration

- the silent observer - the witness within
- detached and indifferent to results
- allowing to happen that which needs to happen
- diminution of the effects of stressors
- strengthens the experience of the observing self
- facilitates balancing of left and right brain action
- increase in creative potential
- allows into consciousness intuitions repressed materials
- allows for acceptance of the unacceptable
- EEG changes
- slowing and synchronicity of brain waves
- a predominance of alpha and theta waves



Alpha Rhythms

- Brain wave frequencies are categorised as:

Gamma 30-60 Hz (Hz: cycles per second)

Beta 17-30 Hz

Alpha 8-13 Hz

Theta 4-8 Hz

Delta 1-4 Hz



- Alpha activity occurs when an individual ceases to pay attention to any number of stimuli which would normally block this activity
- Stimuli may be cognitive, somatic or emotional.
- Alpha waves can produce feelings of calm, serenity, happiness and bliss
- Experienced Zen and Yoga practitioners show high continuous levels of alpha activity

Mind/Body Medicine

- Meditation- MBSR; MBCT; Vipassana;
- Relaxation- various types
- Visualisation
- Hypnosis
- Tai Chi
- Chi Gong
- Yoga
- Bio-feedback



Symptom Stress Spiral

My symptoms make me
anxious
afraid
angry
depressed

My Anxiety
Fear
Anger
Depression
Makes my symptoms worse



History and development of Autogenic Training

- Korbinian Brodman 1868-1918 German
 - neuroanatomy -neuropathology
 - localisation of functions of the cerebral cortex
- Osgar Vogt 1870-1959 German
 - Psychiatrist
 - research in neuropathology and psychosomatic medicine
- Prof Johannes Schultz 1884-1970
 - psychiatrist – research into hypnosis and sleep
 - developed the Autogenic method as a distinct therapy
- Prof Hans Selye 1922-1982 Hungarian
 - physician - developed the concept of Stress
 - research into the contribution of stress to disease
- Prof Wolfgang Luthe 1922-1985 German
 - physician – studied autogenic AT with Schultz
 - developed the Autogenic methods further



AB AT Audit 1993 (133 pts)

SYMPTOMS/DISEASE	Total	IMPROVEMENT	SAME	WORSE
Stress/tension/anxiety	68	60	8	0
Panic attacks	4	4	0	0
Insomnia	13	12	1	0
Fatigue	10	8	2	0
Acute anxiety/shock	2	2	0	0
P.M.T.	3	2	1	0
Cancer	3	2	1	0
ME	4	2	2	0
Parkinson's Disease	4	2	2	0
Palpitations	8	7	0	1
Hypertension	7	3	4	0
Depression	17	10	7	0
Colitis	2	1	1	0
Headaches	12	4	8	0
IBS	9	6	2	1
Injury	1	1	0	0
Pain	10	5	4	1
MS	1	1	0	0
Asthma	5	3	1	0
Dyspepsia	4	3	1	0
Arthritis	5	2	3	0
Cystitis	1	1	0	0
Eczema	4	3	1	0



AB AT Audit 1993



What did you find most beneficial?

- **Control of Symptoms** 32
- **Relaxation** 100
- **Confidence in dealing with problems** 49
- **Group Support** 41

QUESTION 6

Did you notice any other changes in yourself after completing the course?

16 Replied none

117 Gave interesting and varied replies.

- Coping better
- Able to relax
- More positive
- More in control of self
- More assertive
- Emotionally stronger
- More confident
- Calmer
- Don't worry so much
- Recognising my needs
- Looking at life differently
- Able to communicate better
- Able to express my feelings
- Able to speak my mind
- Living in the present, not dreading the future
- Stopped thinking everything is my fault
- Better concentration
- Recognising when to "switch off"
- Helps me to sleep
- Come to terms with my problem
- More energy
- Accepting myself as I am
- Recognising symptoms of stress early
- Less irritable
- AT helped me through a serious operation





QUESTION 7

Have you made any changes in your life or habits?

Many trainees were experiencing major and minor changes in their lives - not the least of which was doing the course. AT undoubtedly strengthens the capacity for change by tapping into inner resources which, because they are not always needed, people are afraid they do not possess.

- Doing AT regularly (a very important change)
- Getting out more
- Not striving so much
- Changed job (quite a lot of trainees)
- Started a new course
- Early retirement
- Taking time for self (very important)
- Taking less pain killers (cost effective)
- Going to the doctor less
- Increased interests and activities
- Changes in relationships
- Doing AT led on to interest in other therapies:
 - Alexander
 - Group therapy
 - Massage
 - Aromatherapy

**"Stress does not flow over me so much now - just a drop, not a deluge"
"I have stopped getting ill at periods of great stress".**

AB 2002 Audit



University College London Hospitals
NHS Trust

The Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital

AUTOGENIC TRAINING

A non-drug approach to anxiety, panic attacks and insomnia

A report on the introduction of
Autogenic Training into a Primary Care Group
Harrow East and Kingsbury PCG (now Harrow PCT)

by
Dr A. Bowden. M.B., Ch.B, D.C.H, MFHom.
Lead Clinician Autogenic Training



• **RESULTS**

1 Referrals

- 20 out of 55 GPs referred patients
 - Total no. of referrals May 2001-May 2002 85
 - No. of courses 8 i.e. 64 places
 - No. of patients starting a training course 56

Reasons for referral

Anxiety, panic attacks and insomnia	15
Anxiety and panic attacks	16
Anxiety and insomnia	10
Anxiety	20
Panic attacks and insomnia	1
Panic attacks	1
Insomnia	1

• **ANXIETY SCORES**

Anxiety scores were recorded at the beginning and end and at follow-up 3 months later using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression scale which gives a numerical score for the intensity of anxiety.

- Scores 7 or below are normal
- 8-10 borderline
- 11-21 abnormal
- Average anxiety scores for the first 6 courses

Course	1	2	3	4	5	6
Start	14.72	13.25	8.4	10.8	15.2	12.5
End	9.99	9.99	7.8	6.6	11.6	6.1
Follow-up	8.5	8	7	5.8	8.4	7.3

The full report of the project is available from the RLHH

AB 2002 Audit-Quotes

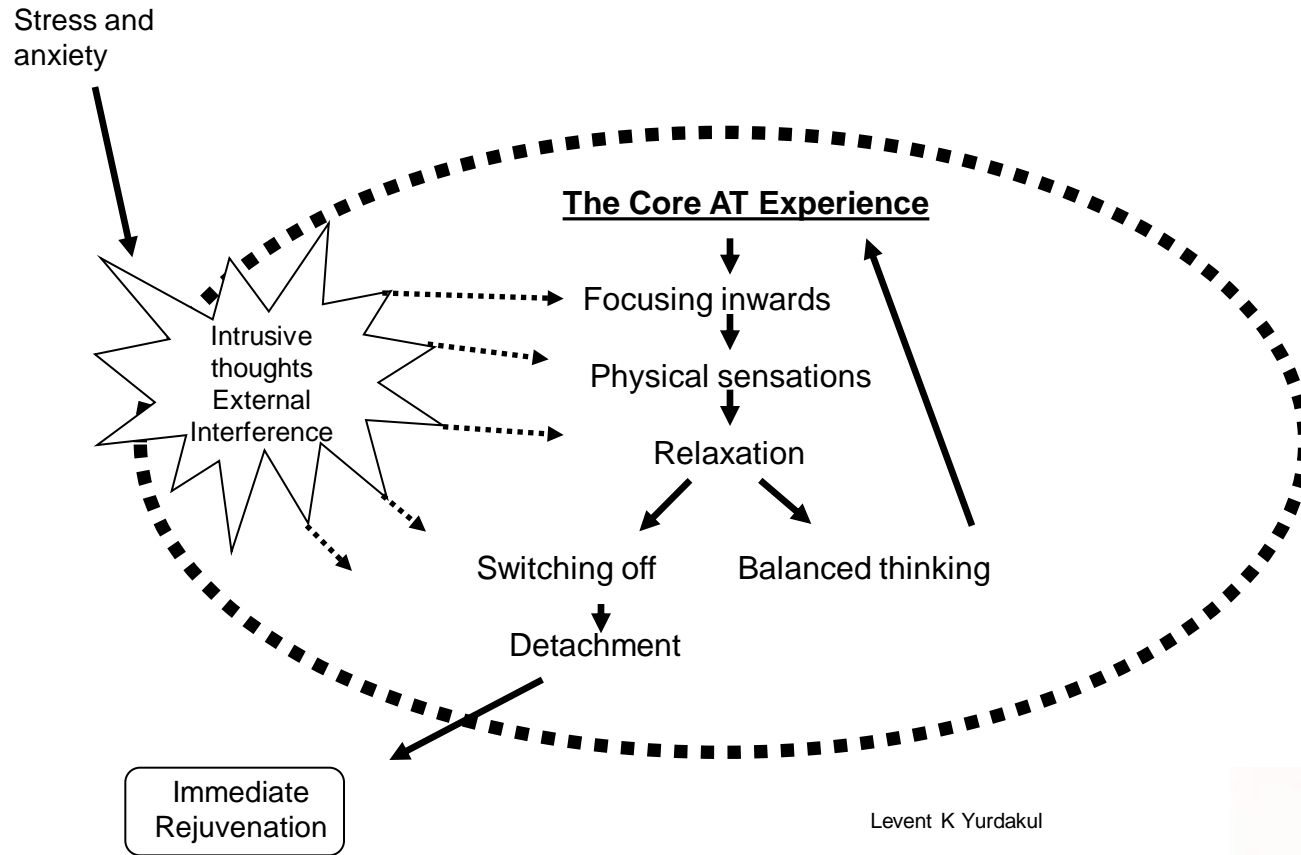
- AT has dramatically reduced my anxiety..I have stopped having panic attacks and my confidence has started to return
- Much better sleep, able to get to sleep a lot quicker and easier and I'm not waking up
- I am less stressed and sleep better



AT Grounded Theory

- Dr Levent K Yurdakul. BSc Hons MSc
- PHD Project 2004
- AT and Anxiety- how does it work?
- Model of experience of AT and its perceived effects for anxiety





Levent K Yurdakul



AT Grounded Theory

Coping

self stress management

emotional processing and expression

rationalising

self reassurance

(autosuggestions and affirmations)

prioritising

relinquishing control



AT Grounded Theory

Positive cognitions

Confidence

new insights

renewed optimism

Well being

symptom related improvements

sense of well being



AT SLEEP STUDY 2007

- Autogenic Training as a Non-Drug Approach to Improving Sleeping Patterns and General Health.
- 200 patients attending AT courses at RLHH over 12 months
- HADS, MYMOP, General Well Being Questionnaire, Sleep Questionnaire



AT SLEEP STUDY 2007

- Questionnaires administered at initial consultation, at the start and the end of eight week course and at three month follow up.



AT SLEEP STUDY 2007

- **RESULTS:**
- The AT course completed by 153 participants,
- 73% were identified as having a sleep-related problem.
- Improvements in sleep patterns included:
- sleep onset latency ($P = 0.049$),
- falling asleep quicker after night waking ($P < 0.001$),
- feeling more refreshed ($P < 0.001$) and more energised on waking ($P = 0.019$).
- MYMOP symptom, well-being, anxiety and depression scores significantly improved (all $P < 0.001$).



AT SLEEP STUDY 2007

- **CONCLUSION:**
- This study suggests that AT may improve sleep patterns for patients with various health conditions
- reduce anxiety and depression, both of which may result from and cause insomnia.
- Improvements in sleep patterns occurred despite, or possibly due to, not focusing on sleep during training.



AT SLEEP STUDY 2007

- **Autogenic Training as a behavioural approach to insomnia: a prospective cohort study**
- [Bowden A, Lorenc A, Robinson N.](#)
- [Prim Health Care Res Dev.](#) 2012
Apr;13(2):175-85. doi:
10.1017/S1463423611000181. Epub 2011
Jul 26



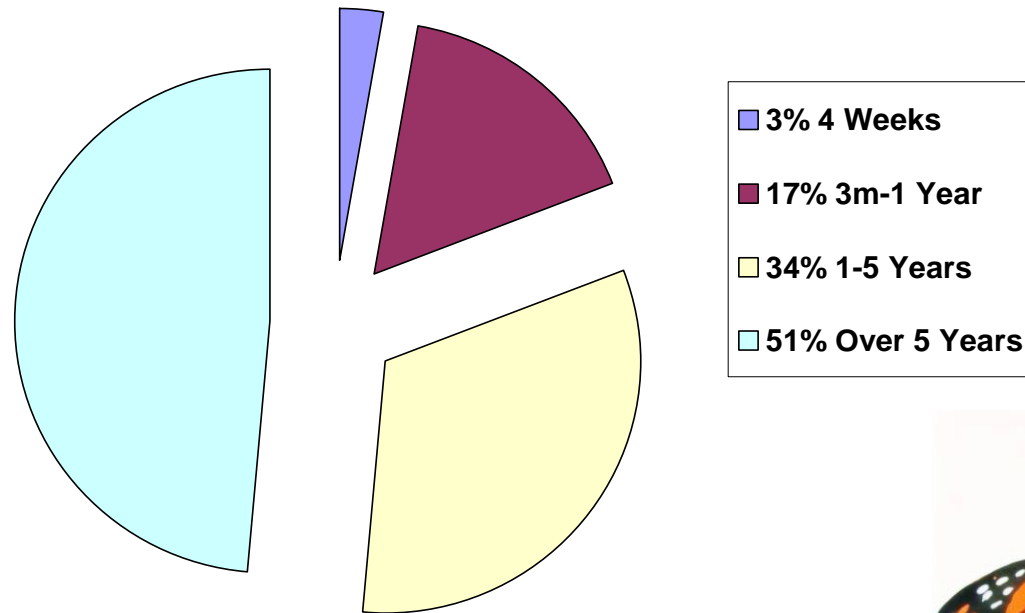
AT Outcomes 2011-12

- 102 patients
- MYMOP before and after 8 week course
- Stephen Ashby



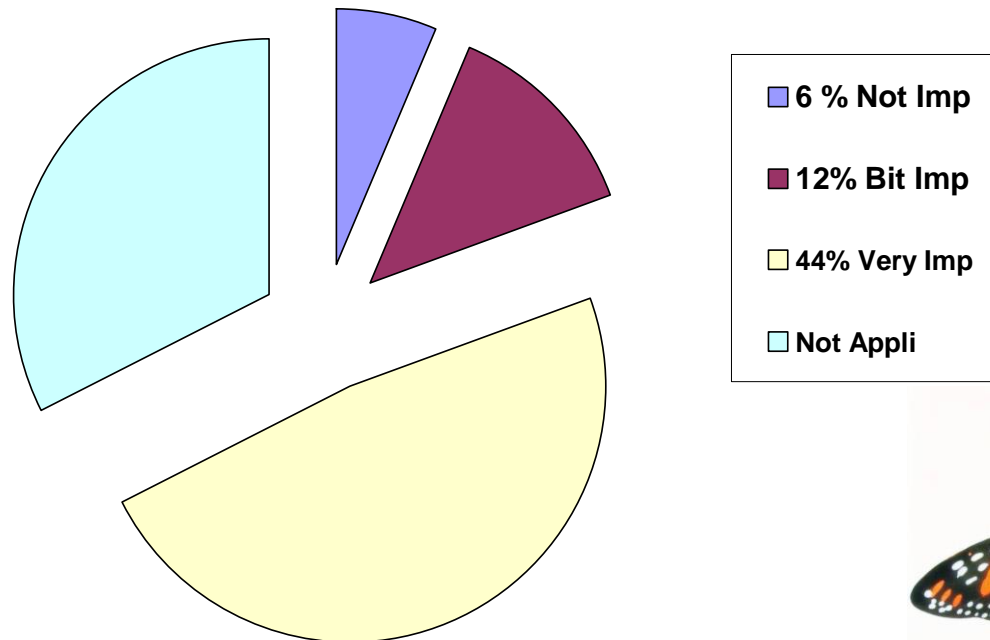
AT Outcomes 2011-12

How long had patients suffered from symptoms



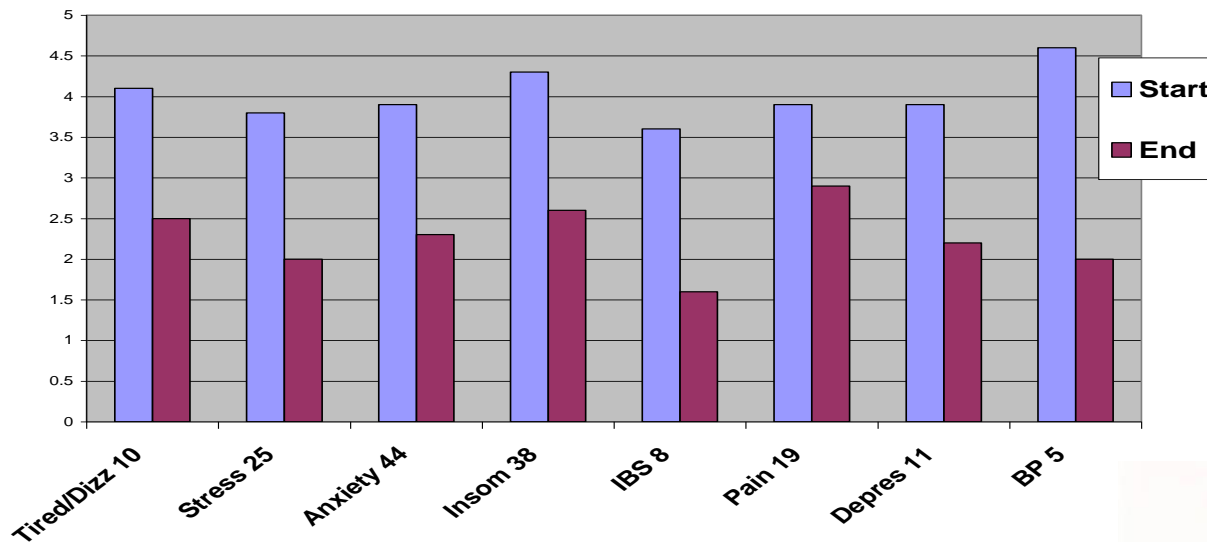
AT Outcomes 2011-12

**Patients were asked
How important is cutting down your medication**



AT Outcomes 2011-12

**Mean scores of symptoms identified by patients attending
Autogenic Training Courses
Using MYMOP**



MYMOP: Measure Your Medical Outcome Profile

Scale:

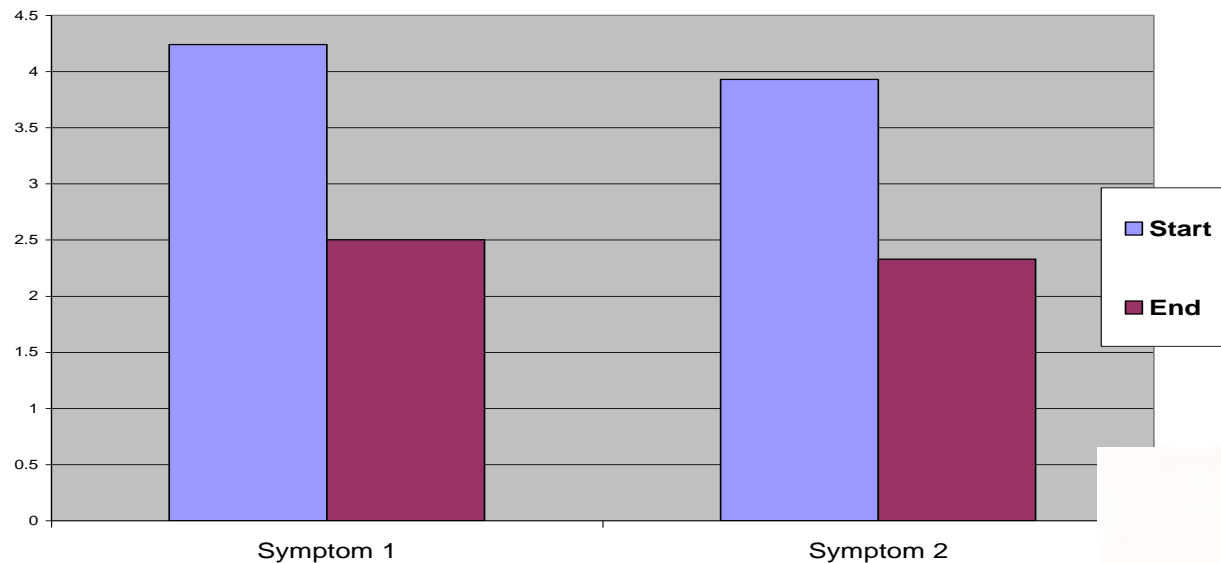
0 is as good as it can be,

6 is as bad as it can be



AT Outcomes 2011-12

**Mean scores of 2 symptoms identified by
102 patients attending
Autogenic Training Courses
Using MYMOP**



MYMOP: Measure Your Medical Outcome Profile

Scale:

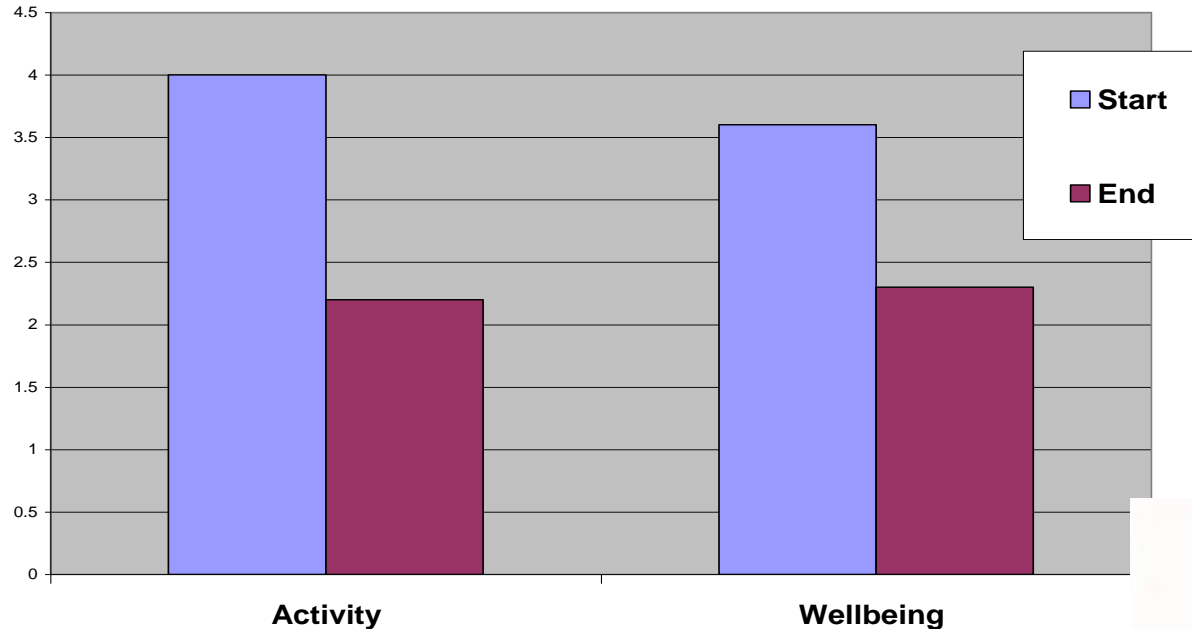
0 is as good as it can be,

6 is as bad as it can be



AT Outcomes 2011-12

**Mean scores of an Activity and Wellbeing
From 102 patients attending
Autogenic Training Courses
Using MYMOP**



MYMOP: Measure Your Medical Outcome Profile

Scale:

0 is as good as it can be,

6 is as bad as it can be



Practice after an AT

- Do trainees continue to practice?



QUESTION 8

Do you continue to practice AT?

I divided the questionnaire into length of time since doing the course to see if there was an obvious cut-off point when people stopped practising.

Time since training

0 - 6 months
6m - 1 year
1 - 2 years
2 - 3 years
3 + years

Response

a. Several times a day
b. Once a day
c. One or twice a week
d. Now and then
e. Only when stressed
f. Not at all

0 - 6 months	a = 2 b = 2 c = 2 d = 2 e = 1	2 - 3 years	a = 4 b = 6 c = 9 d = 12 e = 7 f = 10
6 m - 1 year	a = 1 b = 7 c = 6 d = 6 e = 1 f = 1	3 years +	a = 3 b = 4 c = 5 d = 8 e = 7 f = 4
1 - 2 years	a = 4 b = 4 c = 2 d = 7 e = 2 f = 3		

TOTALS

a	= 14]	
b	= 23)	37 = 28%
c	= 24	24 = 18%
d	= 35]	
e	= 18]	53 = 41%
f	= 18	18 = 13%
	132	

The results show that a significant (28%) proportion of trainees continue to practice AT every day.

18% practice one or twice a week

53% will use AT now and then and particularly when stressed;

13% of trainees have not kept it as a part of their repertoire of self nourishment.

From the results there does not seem to be an obvious cut-off point when AT practice stops. It appears that the technique either engages the trainee in the beginning or not at all.



Future Audit Plans

- MYMOP to be used by every practitioner
- Yearly Report
- Cumulative totals
- Build on AB's work on longer term effects of AT practice including MYMOP
- AT and FMS study by clinical psychologist PHD student



A Story

A gardener observed a butterfly trying to break free from its pupa. He watched the delicate creature struggling violently to get out. The pupa shook and trembled with the butterfly's efforts to emerge, the struggle seemed to go on for an eternity. The gardener decided to help the process with a pair of scissors. He cut a large hole in the pupa allowing the butterfly to tumble to the ground. What the well-meaning man did not realise is that this struggle is part of the transformation process. A young butterfly's wings are engorged with fluid and in the struggle to leave the pupa this fluid is forced from the wings to the body to be reabsorbed and processed. Deprived of its transformative process the butterfly's wings remained filled with fluid and it couldn't fly. The gardener watched in dismay as the butterfly lay on the ground slowly dying – he should not have interfered.

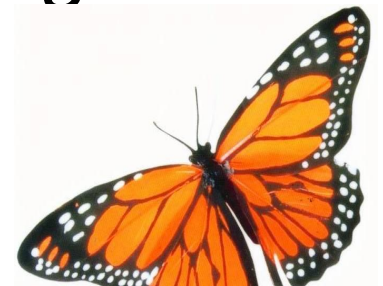
In Autogenic Training it is essential to trust the process and allow it to happen without interference



AT

- “AT is a simple but effective way of tapping into our natural self-healing processes. I know from first-hand experience that learning AT is almost like being immunised against the stresses of daily life. I highly recommend it.”

*Dr Roger Neighbour, OBE DSc
FRCGP FRCP, Patron British Autogenic
Society*



AT

- ONLY HE WHO LETS HIMSELF BE CAN BE HIMSELF

- Schultz

