

Control Your Thinking



Stop

When an unwanted thought occurs step back and simply observe it the way you would watch passing traffic. Don't intervene or engage with the thought, just let it happen.

Do something different

What are you passionate about that diverts and engages you. Occupy the mind with a current project or something enjoyable you are planning, like a holiday or family event. Distract yourself by helping someone else, or absorbing yourself by focusing on an intricate task.

Distract yourself

Making the thought more tangible by talking about it to someone you trust (family, friend, coach), can help give you a new perspective. Do it once, don't bang on about it. Choose someone who will listen without giving advice or trying to fix anything.

Learn relaxation

The reason you'll have heard this so often is that it WORKS! Mindfulness, deep breathing, relaxation techniques can all be learned quickly and easily. If these don't appeal to you consider yoga, tai chi, chi quong or even dance.

Get 'hands on' help

Massage, reflexology and shiatsu all promote relaxation and produce light trance (just as the techniques above do), so if you can't do it for yourself get help from a practitioner.

Guided Visualisation

This can be learned with a teacher, from a CD, a book or the web. Visualisation can be used simply to produce relaxation, or combined with images of your desired future to help with planning and personal development.

Write

Writing down your thoughts can be done a number of ways: a) jot down what's troubling you (before going to sleep for example), so you can put them to one side and come back to them later; b) Writing a plan, synopsis or mind map of something you want to achieve; c) Morning pages. Many people swear by Julia Cameron's technique of writing three pages in longhand on waking in the morning. This should be 'automatic writing' where you simply let it flow, without editing what you write.

Holding the keys

How can you control your thinking?

It's simple, when you know how, but it is not easy, and it takes practice. There are two main aspects to taking charge of your thoughts. Instant means stopping unwanted thoughts, and planned, which means retraining your mind. The more you do the first the easier the second will become. It won't happen though unless you take charge.

I have written handouts on many of these topics and you'll

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