

Hypnosis changes habits

A habit is something we do on a regular basis. It might be lighting a cigarette each time we make a phone call, or having a drink at a certain time of day. It could be scratching a particular spot or biting fingernails.

It is this regularity that builds the habit, rather like walking down the same path day after day. The shallow path becomes a deeper path and after a while it is so much easier to walk the path than push through the undergrowth.

Once these neural pathways have been established, the mind executes them without the need for conscious thought and this is why they can seem so hard to change.

Yet hypnosis provides a route into that unconscious part of the mind where our habits reside and a means to change them.

Emlyn had been biting her fingernails to the quick for 40 years and had tried all manner of things to stop doing this. A friend recommended that she see me.

I told her that I could probably help and that typically three one hour sessions would do the trick.

She arrived for the first session and was surprised to find that the first thing she was asked to do was to imagine what it would be like to have nice healthy fingernails. What would they look like, how good would she feel, what would other people think. She was asked to create an image of herself with healthy nails and make it big, bright and compelling. And she was shown how to insert this new image into her neural pathway, which disrupts the old habit.

Emlyn was beginning to wonder when they were going to do some hypnosis – but actually the change had been made already. To consolidate the change, I talked her into a comfortably relaxed state. In this trance state her unconscious mind was able to amplify the new habit, which was to look after her nails, feel good about them and realise that she had some choice in what she did with her hands.

The first session turned out to be the only session she needed. Now Emlyn has nice healthy fingernails that she is proud to show others.