

## Autogenic Training

Some background information regarding courses run by Dr Ian Ross

Update on One to One Courses in  
East Lothian and beyond via Zoom  
and face to face  
[September 2023](#)



The word "Autogenic"  
means generated  
from within ourselves.

For many of us, life is hectic and stressful. Added to which, we may have unresolved issues relating to childhood or other traumas such as the break-up of a relationship. These can all activate our Stress Response (the Fight / Flight reaction), cause great inner distress, and prevent us from reaching our potential.

However, we all have within us a Natural Healing System which, with Mental Training, we can tap into on a regular basis; this will greatly help us to deal with the inevitable ups and downs of life.

Autogenic Training is an effective form of Mental Training, in which we activate our own innate healing systems. In addition, it has proved very helpful for both personal and professional development.

### Autogenic Training for Well-Being

Autogenic Training (AT) was originally developed by Dr Johannes Schultz in Berlin in the 1920s. His research showed that AT "brings about profound relaxation and relief from the negative effects of stress". We may suffer from stress at work or at home; and indeed distressing feelings are themselves associated with distressed physiology in our bodies as well as our Mind-Brain [Panksepp & Biven 2012].

AT is a skilful means to help us deal effectively with stress and distressing feelings – however these arise. This means it can be an effective form of mental training if we are going through a difficult phase in our life, and / or as a form of mental training for personal growth and development.

#### ✿ [Regular Practice of Autogenic Training helps to facilitate Well-Being](#)

Ian Ross, a member of the British Autogenic Society, has been teaching AT on a group and one to one basis for over twenty years in Edinburgh. He has been teaching the Autogenics 3.0 format of Prof. Luis de Rivera of Madrid University since 2017.

### The Basic AT exercises

The course involves learning a series of mental exercises over nine Sessions, the first eight of which are at weekly intervals. These exercises have the effect of mobilising our own, innate, self-healing powers. (In physiological terms, this involves switching off the potentially damaging Stress Response and *switching on the Relaxation Response*.)

- AT can thus re-balance physiological and mental disharmony by facilitating the rest, repair, and recuperative processes that are within each of us. A full sequence of these mental exercises will last from ten to twenty minutes. The course involves regular home-work<sup>1</sup>. AT is a specific skill, and as with learning any type of skill (e.g. sewing, football, yoga, Tai Chi) we can only become competent with regular practice.
- Schultz was concerned that many therapies result in the client / patient becoming dependant upon the therapist. Once AT is learned, the *individual becomes independent of the therapist*, and has a life-long skill which can greatly help us deal with the challenges of life.

### Brief Mental Exercises

In addition to the above full exercises, very brief mental exercises are also learned which can be used when we are feeling stressed or upset – and when there is no time for the full sequence. These brief exercises can be used, *for example*, when we are in a queue at a post office; when we are waiting at red traffic lights; when we are feeling tense before a meeting – or when the phone rings.

### Dealing with negative / painful emotions and upsets

Anxiety, nervousness, anger, resentment, grief and / or loss are examples of emotions which we all experience from time to time. These reflect the human condition and the suffering that many of us experience. Often this involves negative ruminations in which we may end up in a downward spiral of distress. During the course we cover a number of skilful approaches to deal with such matters.

<sup>1</sup> This means that, ideally, we practice the AT mental exercises three times a day.

Towards the end of the basic course in AT, individual / personal exercises are introduced which can have a positive effect on negative attitudes and on various physical & mental problems. These personal exercises allow us to develop a more wholesome outlook on life and living; these include exercises focusing on Constructive Feelings, which are integrated with concepts from Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, and CBT. In this way AT can facilitate in the development of our True / Authentic Self.

In addition, we look at teaching stories and metaphors, as a way of reframing our outlook and perspective.

### Duration and format of course

The basic AT course consists of:

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| i.   | A one-to-one pre-course orientation session (usually lasting ninety minutes to two hours). |
| ii.  | Nine (roughly) weekly sessions each lasting 120 minutes                                    |
| iii. | A Tenth session six weeks or so after the ninth session.                                   |

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Refresher sessions can be negotiated for those who have completed the course.

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I am now semi-retired and no longer run group Autogenic Training (AT) courses. However, I do from time to time see individuals for AT if, following the one to one pre-course orientation session (mutual assessment) we both feel that a course will be helpful.

**Cost:** this is discussed at the one-to-one pre-course orientation session, and is negotiable, depending on means.

**For further information, please contact Ian Ross:**

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Also see: [www.atdynamics.co.uk](http://www.atdynamics.co.uk) (which includes comments from previous course members).

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Autogenic Training can be helpful for many of us, from all walks of life, including the following:

- Stress at home / work
- Anxiety and some forms of depression.
- General ups and *downs* of life.
- Emotional upset and...
- ...difficulties in dealing with negative / distressing feelings
- Sleep problems
- Tension Headaches / Irritable Bowel
- Personal / Professional Development.

Previous course members have included: mums; teachers; college / university students; singers; gardeners; therapists; secretaries; lawyers; nurses; landscape architects; and garage mechanics.

### A few references and sources:

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Craig, A.D. (Bud) 2015 How Do You Feel?	ISBN 798-0-691-15676-7
Dana, Deb: 2018 <i>The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy: Engaging the rhythm of regulation</i>	ISBN 978-0-393-71237-7
de Rivera, Luis. 2018. <i>Autogenic 3.0 The New Way to Mindfulness and Meditation</i> . Slightly revised from the 2017 printing; the 2018 version has an index; note that the 2017 & 2018 versions have the same: ISBN 978-1548-162054	
Fredrickson, Barbara: 2009. POSITIVITY.	ISBN 978-0-307-39373-9
Goleman, Daniel: 2003; IN: <i>Destructive Emotions – and how we can overcome them</i> . A dialogue with The Dalai Lama	ISBN 0-7475-6182-6
Gilbert, Paul. 2009. <i>The Compassionate Mind. How to use compassion to develop happiness, self-acceptance and well-being</i>	ISBN 978-1- 84901-098-6
Kabat-Zinn, Jon 1990 (2006). <i>Full Catastrophe Living: How to cope with stress, pain and illness using mindfulness meditation</i>	ISBN 0-7499-1585-4
Panksepp, Jaak: 1998. <i>Affective Neuroscience: The Foundation of Human and Animal Emotions</i>	ISBN 0-19-509673-8.
Panksepp, Jaak; & Biven, Lucy. 2012. <i>The Archaeology of Mind: Neuroevolutionary Origins of Human Emotions</i>	ISBN 13-978-0-393-70531-7
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Segal, Zindel V.; Williams, J. Mark G.; & Teasdale, John D.: 2002 <i>Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression: a new approach to preventing relapse</i>	ISBN 1-57230-7064
Sunderland, Margot. 2007 / 2016 <i>What every parent needs to know</i>	ISBN 978-0-2412-1656-9

### Some background on Ian Ross and AT in Leith

Dr Ian Ross retired from General Practice in 2005, having worked in a Leith Practice since 1977. He ran over seventy Autogenic groups at his old surgery (Rose Garden Medical Centre, Leith) from 1994 – 2017; these are no longer possible following changes in the administration of the surgery / LHB.

During the last twenty years, he has developed a specific interest in stress and stressors – and how these can affect us both physically and emotionally. Research in recent decades has confirmed that a number of disciplines, such as Meditation and Autogenic Training, can have a positive effect on our well-being.

Ian Ross is a member of the British Autogenic Society and registered with the UKCP

<https://britishautogenicsociety.uk/>



Ian Ross also offers the “Personal Autogenic Training for Professionals (self-care)” approved by the British Autogenic society and the British Psychological Society