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[Home](#) > Erotic hypnosis?

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## Erotic hypnosis? <sup>[1]</sup>

Dear Alice,

I keep seeing this fetish all over the internet. What is sexual/erotic hypnosis? Is there somewhere my partner and I can learn how to do it to each other, or online?

### **Answer**

Dear Reader,

Erotic hypnosis is the use of hypnosis practices for sensual or sexual purposes. Erotic hypnosis is also referred to as recreational hypnosis (which, by the way, isn't necessarily always sexual in nature, but more on that later). Erotic hypnosis is different than hypnotherapy which utilizes hypnosis in a therapeutic environment to provide *treatment* to a patient for a variety of different issues (some of which *could* be sexual in nature, but not necessarily). So, when you talk about the "fetish" of "sexual/erotic hypnosis," you are most likely referring to recreational hypnosis used for sexual pleasure as the ultimate goal.

Now, to clarify, hypnosis is sometimes used by trained therapists to treat sexual dysfunction (almost always in combination with other psychotherapeutic approaches or treatments). In fact, some research supports the use of hypnotic techniques in sex therapy as more effective than those without hypnosis. In this particular answer, however, the discussion is limited to your specific question regarding hypnosis used for erotic purposes.

For those of you unfamiliar with the practice, hypnosis is a technique used to induce a trance-like state where you are very relaxed, focused, and more open to suggestion than usual. Contrary to popular belief, during hypnosis, your free will remains intact. That is, you don't lose control over your behavior. Hypnosis is utilized for a variety of reasons: to gain control over certain behaviors (e.g., to quit smoking), alter perception (e.g., pain control), or modify emotions (e.g., reducing stress). Hypnotherapy is considered a safe complementary and alternative medical treatment when performed by a trained therapist. When hypnosis is performed by someone who is not certified or who has never undergone training (this includes individuals performing hypnosis on themselves, an activity called self-hypnosis), the chances of adverse effects is increased. Risks associated with hypnosis are rare, but can include: headache, dizziness, nausea, anxiety, and the creation of false memories.

Recreational hypnosis most often refers to erotic hypnosis; hence, why the two terms are most often used synonymously. However, some people enjoy the process of hypnosis, going in and out of trance, unrelated to sex play and with no apparent therapeutic goal. This is still referred to as recreational hypnosis. As mentioned before, during hypnosis, your free will remains intact; however, it's worth keeping in mind that erotic hypnosis can have a powerful effect on a person's perception as well as an influence on their behavior. You will want to be careful how you use it — people might regret or be troubled by the actions they perform while under hypnosis.

People may use erotic hypnosis for the following reasons:

- Reducing inhibitions related to sexual activities.
- Increasing arousal or sensuality.
- Hypnotic fantasy.
- Within a dominant/submissive relationship to support power exchange.

It may be beneficial to reach out to a sex therapist (even better if they is a trained hypnotist) for more information about performing erotic hypnosis on your partner or if considering performing it on yourself. They can provide guidance. In addition, there are also fetish social-networking sites where you could find others who have an interest in erotic hypnosis and may be able to direct you to additional resources. Based on your question, it sounds like you've already seen the loads of information available on the internet — videos, recordings, websites. It's worth exploring these if you and your partner have an interest, just remember to practice caution and stay safe!

Alice!

Category:

[Relationships](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

[Relationship Boosters](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

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## Related questions

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[Sexy role-plays](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

Lost all control in the bedroom [9]

## Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) [10]

Mental Health Services (CUIMC) [11]

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## Footer menu

- ▼ Contact Alice!
  - Content Use
  - Media Inquiries
  - Comments & Corrections
- ▼ Syndication & Licensing
  - Licensing Q&As
  - Get Alice! on Your Website
  - Full Site Syndication
  - Link to Go Ask Alice!

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### Links

[1] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/erotic-hypnosis>

[2] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/relationships>

[3] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/relationship-boosters>

[4] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/sexual-reproductive-health>

[5] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/fetishes-philiias>

[6] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/sexual-variety>

[7] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/sm-roleplaying-%E2%80%94-what-it>

[8] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/sexy-role-plays-0>

[9] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/lost-all-control-bedroom-0>

[10] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/counseling-and-psychological-services-cps-morningside>

[11] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/mental-health-services-cuimc>