7.2 Hypnosis, Biofeedback, and Meditation
I. Introduction

A. Hypnosis is a connection between the mind and body that has been useful in allowing such things as surgery without anesthesia, behavior modifications like quitting smoking, weight loss, stress management, and pain reduction.
II. What is Hypnosis?

A. Hypnosis is a state of altered consciousness characterized by a heightened “suggestibility”.

B. A hypnotist can alter or influence a person’s behavior and thoughts by offering suggestions.
C. Hypnosis is a deliberate focus on awareness.

Example: What position are your feet in right now? Chances are you did not know until your mind deliberately focused on your feet from reading this.

Hypnosis shifts our awareness in the same way.
II. What is Hypnosis? (con’t)

D. People who are hypnotized have a heightened awareness. They are highly responsive and able to focus on one thing and ignore everything else.
II. What is Hypnosis? (con’t)

E. A participant is not under the power of a hypnotist, they cannot be forced to do things against their will. A participant must cooperate with the hypnotist to be successful, anyone can resist by refusing to open their mind to it.
II. What is Hypnosis? (con’t)

F. Theodore Barber argued that hypnosis is not a special state of consciousness because people who are not hypnotized can do the same things as those that are hypnotized.

G. Ernest Hilgard suggested that the hypnotic state is special. He believed that during hypnosis aspects of a person’s consciousness become separated or disassociated. This theory is called neodissociation theory.
F. A posthypnotic suggestion is a suggestion made during hypnosis that influences the participants behavior afterward. Hypnosis may be useful in this manner for changing unwanted behaviors such as smoking or overeating. It may also be used in this manner to help people reduce stress and relax.
III. Biofeedback

A. Biofeedback is a way that people learn to control their body processes with the help of feedback from a machine.

B. People have used biofeedback to learn to control many physical responses including brain waves, blood pressure, heart rate, and skin temperature.
C. The basic principle of biofeedback is: feedback makes learning possible.

Example: By learning to control certain physical functions a person may be able to control headaches by relaxing a certain muscle.
IV. Meditation

A. Meditation is focusing attention on an image, thought, or object to clear your mind and relax.
IV. Meditation (con’t)

B. Three approaches to meditation:

1. **Transcendental Meditation**: involves repeating a sound in your mind called a **mantra**.

2. **Mindfulness Meditation**: focuses on the present moment. For example, you would focus on each body part from the tips of your toes to the top of your head paying special attention to those areas that cause pain.
IV. Meditation (con’t)

3. **Breath Meditation**: is concentrated on your breathing, the process of breathing in and out.

C. Researchers agree that there are some legitimate benefits from meditation including lower blood pressure, heart rates, and breathing rates.