



The Biofeedback Program at Lyster Army Health Clinic is designed to address the concerns and needs of soldiers within the aviation community.

Biofeedback appeals to many individuals for a variety of reasons:

1. It's noninvasive.
2. It may reduce or eliminate the need for medications.
1. It offers a treatment alternative for individuals who cannot take or tolerate medication.
2. It provides an option when traditional medications have not worked well.
1. It may offer an alternative to medications for some physical or occupational conditions.
2. Helps the individual take charge of his/her well-being.

Biofeedback Training

Biofeedback is a treatment technique in which the individual learns to improve subjective well-being and health by using signals from the body.

With biofeedback equipment, the trainee develops the ability to monitor his/her performance; make adjustments to internal systems and bring about improved functioning and focus.



Lyster Army Health Clinic Biofeedback

Training your brain to manage stress
and
other health issues



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What is biofeedback?

Biofeedback is a training technique in which the individual learns to improve personal health by monitoring and modulating his/her own body signals.

This process is accomplished by applying topical electrical sensors to the skin to provide the participant with visual/auditory information or *feedback* about internal body functioning.

Biofeedback sessions focus on monitoring and measuring respiration, skin temperature, muscle tension, blood flow, and/or heart rate. Biofeedback training helps the individual learn how to modulate many physiological processes by enhancing personal awareness of how their body is functioning with the goal of improved performance and reduction in the negative effects of chronic stress.

How does biofeedback work?

Although scientists cannot yet explain the specific mechanisms of change, biofeedback has been extensively researched and found to provide the individual with the skills needed to learn how to manage many physical and behavioral health issues. Most participants who benefit from biofeedback are trained to relax and learn to modify behavioral responses.

Most scientists believe that relaxation is a key component in biofeedback training. This reasoning is based on knowledge of the effects of stress on the body which maintains that stressful events produce strong emotions, which in turn arouses certain physical responses. Many of these responses are controlled by the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), the network that helps produce the “fight or flight” response to perceived threats.

The physical responses to threat emerged at a time when humans faced mostly physical threats. Although “threats” today are seldom physical, the body reacts as if they were. Pupils dilate to let in more light. Sweat increases to reduce the chance of skin cuts. Blood vessels near the skin contract to reduce bleeding and those in the brain and muscles dilate to increase the oxygen supply. The gastrointestinal tract, including stomach and intestines, slows down to reduce energy expended in digestion. The heart beats faster and blood pressure rises. After a threat has occurred, people are normally able to calm down and the body returns to normal functioning or homeostasis.

In situations that require a chronic state of alert or when emotions are not able to be expressed, the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) and the body’s physical responses to stress become habitual and permanently overactive. The physiological cost of this chronic exposure to stress can result in actual damage to body tissues.

Biofeedback focuses on training that alters customary reactions to stress. This is accomplished by using auditory /visual signals that provide prompts to help the individual exert voluntary control over physiological processes such as respiration, heart rate, blood flow, muscle movement and skin temperature. In altering habitual reactions to stress that may contribute to pain or disease, the individual is able to create a subjective relaxed state.

Why is biofeedback helpful?

The benefits of the relaxed state created by biofeedback include:

- more energy
- better sleep
- enhanced immunity
- increased concentration
- better problem-solving abilities
- greater efficiency
- less headaches and pain
- better emotion regulation
- less anger, anxiety, frustration