

PTSD & Neurofeedback

Many people suffer traumatic experiences that may permanently alter the course of their lives. These include military personnel who have been in combat, individuals who are raped, or others who survive natural disasters like hurricanes or tornadoes that may destroy their homes and all they own. The emotional troubles that result from such experiences are similar, and fall under the heading of PTSD.

A few years ago Camp Pendleton did a study with 350 Marines employing neurofeedback (a technique where electrodes are placed on the scalp and auditory and visual feedback allow a person to change their brain's electrical activity to achieve improvement in their mental health). The results were so good they expanded it to 500 Marines there. The military has since expanded the research to five other bases in the U.S.

Briefly, some of the results included 75% of active duty Pendleton Marines showing significant recovery from PTSD symptoms, and 80% experienced significant relief specifically from depression. These results exceed what can be achieved with anti-depressant medication. Moreover, 60-80% of the personnel showed a significant decrease in a variety of other symptoms (see the table below).

Symptom	% of people who had a decrease in symptoms (comparison of 'before' and 'after' treatment)
Suicidal thoughts	75%
Flashbacks	70%
Panic attacks	80%
Agitation	70%
Anxiety and depression	70%
Fears/phobias	60%
Night sweats	80%
Headaches	75%

More specifically:

- ✚ about one fourth of trainees responded quite rapidly to training, within 10-20 sessions, and the improvement tended to cut across all symptom categories
- ✚ about another half of trainees responded at a more typical rate, requiring 20-40 sessions for substantial symptom abatement
- ✚ this leaves another quarter of trainees who either responded more slowly or not at all.
- ✚ the most common complaints related to sleep quality, involving 200 of the 350 subjects. Psychology rates the effectiveness of treatment ('How big a difference does this make?') as 'small,' 'medium,' or 'large.' Sleep improvement was rated as 'large.'
- ✚ irritability was an issue of 164 subjects, and yielded a 'large' improvement.
- ✚ being unmotivated was a complaint of 114 subjects, and that yielded a 'large' improvement.
- ✚ depression symptoms were a complaint of 104, and that yielded a 'large' improvement.
- ✚ migraines were a complaint of 84, and that yielded a 'medium' improvement.

If you are having problems with PTSD, consider using neurofeedback to help improve your life.



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