

Side effects of EMDR

When doing EMDR, some people experience different side effects from processing. Here is a list of things that people have reported to experience.



Positive Side Effects



Reduced or eliminated distress associated with an event or memory



Lasting change—no longer affected by intrusive memories



Feeling more in control of life, emotions, and thoughts

Experience new meaning about a situation and what happened



Removal of bodily sensations associated with trauma



Removal of PTSD symptoms like nightmares, shame, and guilt



Increased feelings of empowerment and self-esteem



Feeling lighter and less burdened



Removal of negative or critical beliefs about self

Separate self from the event (i.e., that wasn't me)



Create distance between self and the event



Resolution of memories carried around for years



Increased ability to have sex without shame or discomfort, in cases where someone has had a sexual abuse or assault history



Increased ability to recognize appropriate responsibility of self and others from an event

Recall of sensory abilities lost in childhood (i.e., sights, smells, body sensations)



Increased optimism



Increased self-compassion



Short-term

(i.e., during processing)



Emotional changes (i.e., experiencing sadness, anger, anxiety, disbelief, etc.)



Recalling of suppressed or forgotten memories

Feeling nauseous



Having a headache



Increased anxiety



Feeling vulnerable



Feeling tired for fatigued

Feeling lightheaded



Remembering traumatic memories



Long-term (After processing, lasting for days between sessions)

Increased anxiety and distress



Retriggering of memories

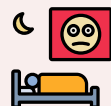


Intrusive memories



Vivid dreams

Uncomfortable body sensations like pins and needles



Sleeping difficulties (i.e., restlessness, nightmares)

Negative Side Effects



DATA AND SOURCE PROVIDED BY

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 Fleming, L. (2024). The potential risks of EMDR therapy. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com/dangers-of-emdr-therapy-8426081>.