

Author Shares Science-Based Technique to Conquer ADHD Without Ritalin®

Imagine having to read a sentence over and over to retain its meaning. Feeling anxious all the time and out of sync with the rest of the world. Not being able to follow a long conversation or follow through on an activity or work assignment. That's ADHD—Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder—the most common childhood psychiatric condition and the scourge of a growing number of adults. Two-thirds of sufferers are on controversial drugs such as Ritalin. But one woman found a way to treat the ailment successfully—without drugs.

“Inside your brain is everything you need to recover from ADHD.”

It wasn't until graduate school that Nicky VanValkenburgh learned why she had always struggled with distractions and an inability to focus: she had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Although she'd always been a good student, she was overwhelmed by long-winded lectures and found it increasingly difficult to concentrate on her textbooks. So she asked her doctor to prescribe what thousands of others with ADHD swore by: Ritalin.

Initially, she was euphoric; she could concentrate and complete complicated tasks. “It was wonderful—I felt like the Bionic Woman,” she recalls. But severe side effects, which included crying and rebounding, forced Nicky to give up the medication. “I hated Ritalin and what it was doing to me.” She tried other drugs that had the same outcome: great instant results but a nasty downside. Thus began her long journey to understand what was happening in her “ADHD brain.”

After graduating with honors, Nicky went on to marry and start a family. It wasn't until 15 years after graduation that she discovered something that would change her life: a system



The ALERT light and sound machine.

of brain retraining that would relieve ADHD symptoms almost entirely—in just 60 days. A friend who also had ADHD told her about the ALERT, a state-of-the-art light and sound machine with a specific 60-day protocol for treating the disorder. Intrigued, she bought a machine, put on the eyeglasses and headphones, and began listening to tapes with prerecorded sessions for ADHD. Nicky found the device, with its gently pulsing lights and “heartbeat” sounds, to be soothing—so soothing that she fell asleep. A control box let her advance from

lesson to lesson. After using the ALERT machine for just 22 minutes a day for two months, she realized her ADHD symptoms had all but disappeared.

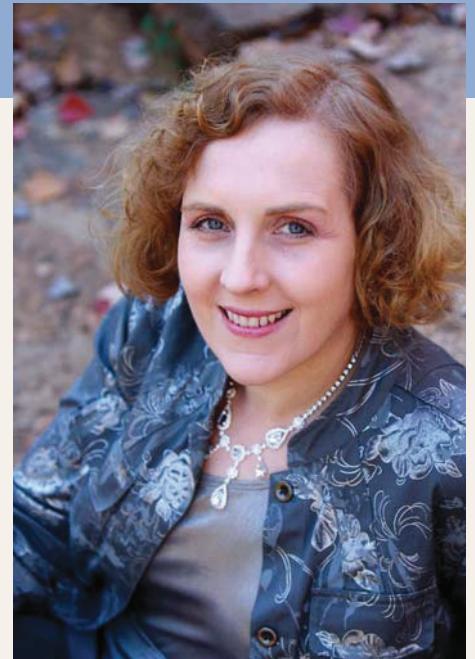
The Science Behind the Technology

The ALERT machine (Attentive Living through Energizing, Restorative Technology) enabled Nicky to practice and master what is known as the Rhythm of Peak Performance, or Sensory Motor Performance, which was discovered by neuroscientist Barry Serman in 1968 and has long been in use by neurofeedback clinics.

“As you hear and see this rhythm,” Nicky explains, “your brain starts to mirror it. With repeated use, your brain actually learns to master the Rhythm of Peak Performance.” This is possible, scientists have discovered, due to neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to change, grow and develop.

Excited by her discovery—“it was like opening up a treasure chest”—Nicky wanted to share it with others, and wrote and self-published the book, *Train Your Brain, Transform Your Life: Conquer ADHD in 60 Days, Without Ritalin*. “This is too good to be kept secret,” she says.

The ALERT makes brain training available for home use—at a fraction of the



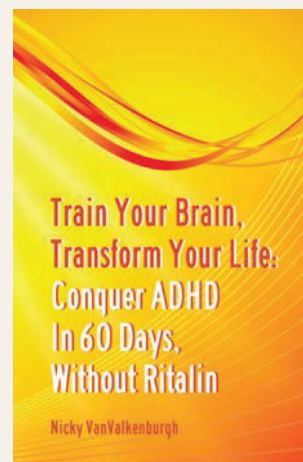
Nicky VanValkenburgh

cost of in-clinic treatment. “You can fix the imbalance of ADHD by training your brain and restoring its natural function. If there is nothing wrong with the physical structure of your brain—such as brain damage—then functioning can be restored.” She suggests that others read her book and decide for themselves if this brain training program is right for them or not.

Making an Informed Decision

Train Your Brain, Transform Your Life discusses symptoms of ADHD, how various types of brainwaves cause/correct ADHD, how Ritalin works and reasons to avoid it, and what the brain needs to conquer ADHD. She points out the benefits of eating dopamine-rich foods such as blueberries, salmon and flaxseed; discusses the Three R's—Relaxation, Repair and Rejuvenation; and provides a recommended reading list for further information. The book contains comments from clinical psychologists on the dangers of Ritalin and the benefits of brain retraining.

Because Ritalin is an amphetamine, in the same family as cocaine and codeine, “It gets you high,” Nicky says, “but then you crash. Ritalin sedates you, but you're not cured.” The light-sound machine, however, “makes new neural pathways in the brain—permanent, lasting changes.”



The foreword to *Train Your Brain, Transform Your Life* was written by Dave Siever, founder of a Canadian electronics design and manufacturing firm and, with Minnesota school psychologist Michael Joyce, the co-developer of the ALERT machine. This machine—which increases oxygen and blood flow to the brain—was initially used for children with dyslexia and other problems, successfully getting them off medications and into normal classrooms. The machine is licensed by Health Canada as Class I Medical Devices for the treatment of ADHD, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, seasonal affective disorder (SAD) depressed mood, insomnia, and anxiety.

“My goal is to make the ALERT system and protocol as accepted in the U.S. as they are in Canada,” Nicky says. “Canadian insurance companies are required to cover the cost of the machine when physicians prescribe it for patients with ADHD symptoms.”

Nicky notes that there are other light and sound machines on the market, but the ALERT appears to be the only one that has a specific 60-day protocol to help people conquer ADHD. And, although brain retraining is not a new concept, Nicky believes her book is the first of its kind to explain how brain training with light and sound technology can be applied to ADHD.

What Parents and Educators Are Saying

Many have found the book’s drug-free approach to treating ADHD very appealing and the results nothing short of amazing. Parents are elated that school grades are improving as their children’s attention spans increase. Some children, once earmarked for special education classes, no longer need them. Adults have reported that they can accomplish tasks much more quickly, get to work on time, and experience a huge drop in their frustration levels.

Nicky’s website, TrainYourBrainTransformYourLife.com, contains letters from pleased children, parents, educators, and healthcare professionals endorsing Nicky’s book and the brain-training techniques she espouses.

Nicky is delighted when readers tell her how their lives have been transformed by her book and the ALERT brain-training system. “One man told me how much money he had saved; he used to spend two hundred dollars a month on neurotherapy,” she comments. A veteran afflicted by Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder benefited from her program, after suffering for years and trying numerous “solutions” that didn’t work. He has been able to taper off and finally discontinue his anxiety medication with his doctor’s help.

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What the Future Holds

The busy author and mother is currently writing another book, this time with Donna Ventura, on a nutritional detox program for people with ADHD. She’s also in the planning stages of co-authoring a book with a trauma counselor who has used the machine successfully for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. That book will also revolve around light and sound technology.

Nicky continues to reach out to people through television and radio appearances. When she talks to audiences about ADHD and Ritalin, she’ll ask: “Do you feel as if your brain isn’t operating at peak capacity? Can you spare 22 minutes a day?”

She reminds her listeners that “the brain is an organ, but it behaves like a muscle. The more you use and challenge your brain, the stronger it becomes. And when you train your brain, you transform your life.”

A motivational writer with 20 years’ writing experience for various publications, **Nicky Van Valkenburgh** has a Master’s in Journalism from Regent University and a Bachelor’s in Psychology from Eastern University. She is also a contributing writer for *Upstate Parent*, *Low Country Parent*, and *Palmetto Parent* magazines, and assignments have included interviews with film director Steven Spielberg and actor Will Farrell.

She is the director of 20 Minutes to Less Stress.com, which welcomes more than 100,000 visitors yearly and has been online since 2005.

Train Your Brain, Transform Your Life was voted the Most Outstanding Self-Improvement Book by the Mom’s Choice Awards® in 2011, won a gold Reader’s Choice Award for best motivational book, and is a finalist for the USA Today Book Awards.

Nicky has been featured on the *Dr. Melanie Show*, *Transforming Health With Brad King*, *Family Caregivers Unite!* with Dr. Gordon Atherly, *Read My Lips Tips for Success* with Linnaea Mallette, *Fairytale Wishes* with Debbie Glickman, *Patrick Timpone Show*, *Something Needs to Be Said* with Katherine Waddell, and many more.

ADHD is typically caused by genetic factors or a birth trauma. The symptoms of ADHD fall into three groups:

- Lack of attention (inattentiveness)
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsive behavior (impulsivity)

Teenagers with ADHD are less likely than classmates with other mental health conditions to graduate on time and are more likely to drop out of high school completely. As they move into adulthood, they suffer a diminished ability to hold steady jobs.

One in ten Americans has some form of this disorder. Estimates on how many Americans are ADHD-afflicted vary, from 1% on the low end to as much as 6%, which equals about 10 million people. The Centers for Disease Control estimate that ADHD affects 3 to 7 percent of school-aged children. It is diagnosed much more often in boys than in girls.

ADHD may run in families, but it is not clear exactly what causes it. Whatever the cause, it seems to be set in motion early in life during brain development. Imaging studies suggest that the brains of children with ADHD are different from those of other children.

Most children with ADHD have at least one other developmental or behavioral problem.



Nicky lives in South Carolina with her husband, Jim, and their sons, Sean and Perry.