

Relaxation Techniques

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Find a quiet relaxing place;
- Clear mind and think of a pleasant image or scene;
- Practice slow breathing;
- Tense each muscle group for 7 to 10 seconds and relax for 10 seconds;

Mind relaxation

- Find a quiet relaxing place;
- Practice slow breathing;
- Allow your mind to think of a pleasant memory or peaceful scene;
- If worries and thoughts crowd in, don't react to them, just let them float out of your mind.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

- Place one hand on your abdomen right beneath your rib cage;
- Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into the bottom of your lung and send the air as low as you can (your hand should actually rise);
- When you have taken a full breath, pause for a moment and then exhale slowly through your nose or your mouth, depending on your preference. Be sure to exhale fully;
- As you exhale, allow your whole body to "let go";
- Do ten slow abdominal breaths. Try to keep your breathing smooth and regular.

5 sights/ 5 sounds/ 5 sensations

- Identify five things that you see;
- Identify five things that you hear;
- Identify five things that you sense;
- Identify four things that you see;
- Identify four things that you hear;
- Identify four things that you sense;
- (Cont)...

Visualisation: Rules for Effective Visualisation

- Make yourself comfortable;
- Scan your body, seeking tension in specific muscles. Relax those muscles as much as you can;
- Form mental sense impressions. Involve all your senses- sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste;
- Use affirmations (short, positive statements that affirm your ability to relax) E.g. I am not tense; I am letting go of tension; I can relax at will;
- Visualise three times per day- visualisation practice is easiest in the morning and night while you lie in bed. Once mastered, you can visualise in other settings;
- Relaxation takes time to learn what methods work best for you. When you feel tense try one of these newly learned skills to assist in reducing the tension. Sometimes monitoring or recording your experiences helps to demonstrate how the experience was effective for you. A monitoring sheet has been provided for you;
- This is designed to help you practice relaxation and monitor your own progress.

60 Seconds

- Breath in for 3 seconds;
- Breath out for 3 seconds;
- Continue for 1 minute (10 breaths per minute).

Given that it takes time to learn relaxation skills, we suggest you trial each of these and complete a Relaxation Diary to measure their effectiveness. Bear in mind that it takes time to learn relaxation skills, so these may take some time to reach their optimal effectiveness.