

Relax

How often do you take time out to really *relaxxxxxx*?

Do you rush from one task to the next? Do you get to the end of the day or end of the week and wonder where it went? Do you feel stress and tension in your mind and/or body? Do you have trouble sleeping?

If you've answered 'yes' to any of the above questions, you might like to try the following techniques to gain some balance in your busy life.

Practicing these relaxation techniques several times a day (5-10 minutes each time) will help reduce stress, anxiety and tension. Also, if you practice when you're not under stress or feeling anxious (e.g., when you're stopped at the traffic lights, doing the dishes, walking the dog, having a shower), this will make it easier to do these techniques when stress or anxiety takes hold.

5 Senses Technique

Name 5 things that you can see, hear, feel, taste and/or touch. Notice them as if you have never seen them before.

5-4-3-2-1 Technique

Name 5 things you can see, hear and feel

Name 4 things you can see, hear and feel

Name 3 things you can see, hear and feel

Name 2 things you can see, hear and feel

Name 1 thing you can see, hear and feel



Describe

Describe your environment in detail, using all your senses. Or describe an everyday activity, a friend or an animal in great detail.

Count

Count to 10 very slowly.

Or count backwards from 100 in 7's.

ABC's

Say the alphabet very slowly.

Categories

Think of a category and try and name every thing you can in that category (i.e., fruits – name every fruit you can think of).

Sensations

Run cool or warm water over your hands.

Grounding

Firmly push your feet into the floor - literally "grounding" them! Notice the tension centred in your feet as you do this. Remind yourself you are connected to the ground.

Grounding Touch

Carry a grounding object in your pocket, which you can touch whenever you feel triggered or stressed.

Walk

Walk slowly; notice each footstep, saying "left or "right" as you walk.

Favourites

Think of your favourite colour, animal, season, food, time of day, or place.

Loved Ones

Picture people you care about (look at a photograph).

Inspiration

Remember the words to an inspiring song, quote, or poem.

Favourite Activity

Listen to your favourite music, draw or paint, write, dance, exercise, cook, or do any other activity that relaxes you.

Meditate

Spend some time each day focussing on your breath. Sit in a comfortable position, close your eyes and just notice your breath – just watch it, be aware of it, don't try to control it.



Relax

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Close your eyes and as you breathe in through your nose, focus on tensing a muscle group while counting to five, and then breathe out through your mouth relaxing that muscle group. Start with the feet and toes, then move up to your knees, thighs, rear, abdomen, chest, fingers and hands, forearms, upper arms, shoulders, neck, jaw, eyes and forehead - all while maintaining deep, slow 'Buddha Belly Breathing'.

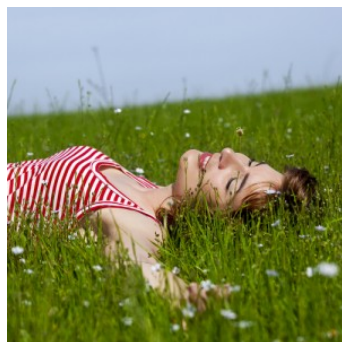
Deep Muscle Relaxation

Breathe slowly and deeply, in through your nose, out through your mouth using 'Buddha Belly Breaths' while you focus on the following muscle areas.

- + Face: push your eyebrows together, as though frowning, then release.
- + Neck: gently tilt your head forwards, pushing your chin down towards your chest, then slowly lift again.
- + Shoulders: pull them up towards your ears (shrug), then relax them down towards your feet.
- + Chest: breathe slowly and deeply into your diaphragm then breathe slowly out.
- + Arms: stretch your arms away from your body, reach out, then relax.
- + Legs: push your toes away from your body, then pull them towards your body, then relax.
- + Wrists and hands: stretch your wrist by pulling your hand up towards you, and stretch out your fingers and thumbs, then relax.

Your Favourite Place

Close your eyes and breathe deeply while focusing on your favourite place. Imagine what you can hear, see, feel, smell, taste and/or touch. Immerse yourself totally in the experience.



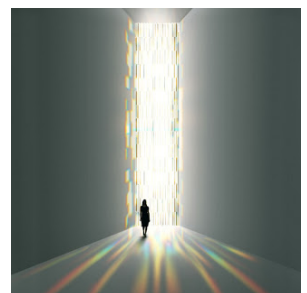
Body Scan

Focus on your breathing and breathe deeply for two minutes, until you start to feel comfortable and relaxed. Turn your focus to the toes of your right foot. Notice any sensations you feel while continuing to also focus on your breathing. Imagine each deep breath flowing to your toes. Remain focused on this area for two breaths. Move your focus to the sole of your right foot. Tune in to any sensations you feel in that part of your body and imagine each breath flowing to the sole of your foot. After two breaths, move your focus to your right ankle and repeat. Move to your calf, knee, thigh, hip, and then repeat the sequence for your left leg. From there, move up the torso, through the lower back and abdomen, the upper back and chest, and the shoulders. Move your focus to the fingers on your right hand and then move up to the wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm, and shoulder. Repeat for your left arm. Then move through the neck and throat, and finally all the regions of your face, the back of the head, and the top of the head. Pay close attention to your jaw, chin, lips, tongue, nose, cheeks, eyes, forehead, temples and scalp. When you reach the very top of your head, let your breath reach out beyond your body and imagine yourself hovering above yourself. After completing the body scan, relax for a while in silence and stillness, noting how your body feels. Then open your eyes slowly.



Healing Light

Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Choose a colour that you find soothing, relaxing and healing. Now imagine that there is a stream of light above you and it's your favourite colour. Every time you breathe in, this colour gently touches you. Imagine that everywhere the light embraces you it soothes and relaxes you. This light comes from an endless source, so the more light you breathe in, the more light there is available.



Imagine It

Close your eyes and imagine yourself becoming calm and relaxed – what do you look like, what does it feel like, what would you be doing?