

Relaxation Exercises

Remember:

- Do these exercises SLOWLY, taking controlled deep breaths (3 seconds breathing in, 3 seconds breathing out). You can do these exercises as often as you like.
- Some kinds of worry are harder to ignore just by distracting yourself. If that's the kind of worry you're feeling, try saying or writing down what you're worried about and then think of other possible outcomes that would be less worrisome or ways that the situation can be helped, solved or made a little bit better.

Progressive Relaxation

(body clenching and stretching) Lying down comfortably, close your eyes and let your breath out fully. Take a deep breath in and exhale slowly. Relax all your muscles as much as you can.

- ❑ Focus all your attention on your **right arm**.
- ❑ Squeeze your **right hand** into a fist, hold it tight and count to 5, now stretch out and relax.
- ❑ Bend your arm, flexing your **bicep muscle**, hold it tight for 5 seconds, now stretch out and relax completely.
- ❑ Push your **whole arm** into the bed, feel the tension, hold it for 5 seconds, now relax it.
- ❑ Pay attention to how your **whole arm** feels now.

- ❑ Focus all your attention on your **left arm**.
- ❑ Squeeze your **left hand** into a fist, hold it tight and count to 5, now stretch out and relax.
- ❑ Bend your arm, flexing your **bicep muscle**, hold it tight for 5 seconds, now stretch out and relax completely.
- ❑ Push your **whole arm** into the bed, feel the tension, hold it for 5 seconds, now relax it.
- ❑ Pay attention to how your **whole arm** feels now and how different the other arm feels.

- ❑ Now focus your attention on **both arms**.
- ❑ Squeeze **both hands** into fists, hold them tight and count to 5, now stretch out and relax.
- ❑ Bend both arms, flexing both **bicep muscles**, hold tight for 5 seconds, now stretch them out and relax completely.
- ❑ Push **both arms** into the bed, feel the tension, hold it for 5 seconds, now relax.

- ❑ Focus all your attention on your **right foot**.
- ❑ Squeeze your **toes** up tight, hold them tight and count to 5, now stretch them out, now relax.
- ❑ Bend your **whole foot**, hold it tight for 5 seconds, stretch it out and now relax completely.
- ❑ Focus your attention on your **right calf** (lower leg). Squeeze it for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus your attention on your **right knee**. Squeeze it for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus your attention on your **right thigh** (upper leg). Squeeze it for 5 seconds, now relax.

- ❑ Focus all your attention on your **left foot**.
- ❑ Squeeze your **toes** up tight, hold them tight and count to 5, now stretch them out, now relax.
- ❑ Bend your **whole foot**, hold it tight for 5 seconds, stretch it out and now relax completely.
- ❑ Focus your attention on your **left calf** (lower leg). Squeeze it for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus your attention on your **left knee**. Squeeze it for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus your attention on your **left thigh** (upper leg). Squeeze it for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus all your attention on **both feet**.

- ❑ Squeeze your **toes** up tight, hold them tight and count to 5, now stretch them out, now relax.
- ❑ Bend your **whole feet**, hold it tight for 5 seconds, stretch it out and now relax completely.
- ❑ Focus your attention on **both calves** (lower leg). Squeeze it for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus your attention on **both knees**. Squeeze it for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus your attention on **both thighs** (upper leg). Squeeze it for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus all your attention on your **bottom**. Squeeze for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus all your attention on your **stomach**. Squeeze for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus all your attention on your **chest**. Squeeze for 5 seconds, now relax.
- ❑ Focus all your attention on your **shoulders**. Squeeze for 5 seconds, now relax.

- ❑ Now take a deep breath, counting to 5 while you breathe in and 5 while you breathe out.
- ❑ Repeat the deep breaths 3 more times.
- ❑ Imagine the most peaceful relaxing scene you can think of, for example, a sunset on the beach, listening to the rain, etc.

Visualization

Close your eyes and imagine the most fun or the most beautiful place you can think of. Imagine as many details as possible starting with:

- ❑ Your body position: are you lying down or sitting?
- ❑ What is beneath you: water, sand, a chair? What does it feel like?
- ❑ What are you looking at?
- ❑ What do you hear? (the waves? Birds? Music? People talking?)
- ❑ What do you smell?
- ❑ Who are you with?
- ❑ What are you wearing?
- ❑ What does it feel like to be in this place?

For each of these things, think of as many details as you can. If it's hard to focus, imagine that you are describing the experience to someone who has never been there before.

Imagery Relaxation

For every image, spend 5-7 seconds trying to picture it. Imagine all the sounds, smells and sights that go with the image.

- ❑ Can you imagine a beautiful sunset
- ❑ Can you imagine snow falling slowly to the ground
- ❑ Can you imagine drifting in a row boat on a warm summer day
- ❑ Can you imagine looking at a waterfall
- ❑ Can you imagine listening to the rain
- ❑ Can you imagine drinking something you like when you are very thirsty
- ❑ Can you imagine coming into a warm room on a cold wintry day
- ❑ Can you imagine looking at a beautiful flower
- ❑ Can you imagine the smell of something cooking or baking that you really like
- ❑ Can you imagine watching waves rolling in and breaking on the beach
- ❑ Can you imagine how you feel just before you fall asleep
- ❑ Can you allow your body to feel like a rag doll
- ❑ Can you imagine listening to the wind blowing through the trees
- ❑ Can you notice the feeling of the bed/chair holding you
- ❑ Can you imagine watching the clouds drift by on a summer day