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Learning Disability Psychology Service



# How to relax



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## How to relax

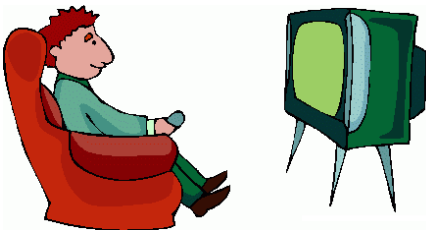
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## What is relaxation?



Relaxation is something you can do to make you feel less anxious or stressed.

You can relax by doing something you like. For example:



- watching TV



- having a shower



- listening to music

# What is relaxation?



There are also some other things you can do to help you relax.

These things are called relaxation therapies.

There are 3 main types of relaxation therapy:



1. Deep breathing



2. Relaxing your muscles



3. Thinking of a place that makes you feel calm

This leaflet will tell you about these types of relaxation.

You can try them if you want.



## 1. Deep breathing

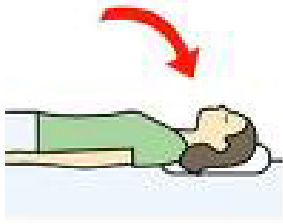


- When people are stressed, worried or anxious they often take quick and short breaths.
- Breathing this way can make you feel worse.



- Deep breathing can help you to feel calm and in control again.
- You could do deep breathing on your own or you can ask someone you know well to practise deep breathing with you.

This is how you can do deep breathing:



- Lie down flat on your bed or the floor



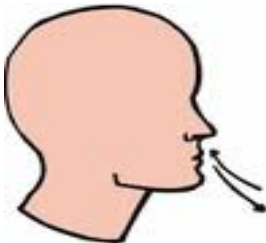
- Put one hand on your stomach just above your belly button



- Put the other hand on your chest



- Look at your hands moving up and down as you are breathing



- Breathe in slowly through your nose and try to hold it for a few seconds before breathing out through your mouth



- The hand on your stomach should move up and down and the hand on your chest should hardly move



- Practise this breathing for 5 - 10 minutes and notice how much calmer you feel

## 2. Muscle relaxation

- In muscle relaxation you make your muscles tense and then relax them
- It can help you to learn the difference between feeling tense and feeling relaxed
- You could ask someone you know well to practice muscle relaxation with you
- On this page are examples of what you can do to relax your muscles



Squash your face up

Count 1...2...3...

Relax



Open your mouth wide

Count 1...2...3...

Close your mouth and relax



Lift your shoulders up to your ears

Count 1...2...3...

Drop your shoulders and relax



Clench your fists and do a strong man pose

Count 1...2...3...

Drop your arms and relax

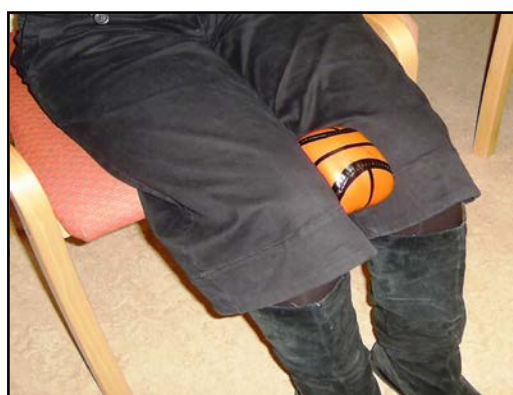


Stretch your arms out in front of you

Imagine you are lifting heavy shopping bags

Count 1...2...3...

Drop your arms and relax



Squeeze a ball in between your legs

Count 1...2...3...

Relax



Squeeze your bum cheeks together

Count 1...2...3...

Relax



Lift your legs

Point your toes away from your body

Count 1...2...3...

Drop your legs and relax



Lift your legs

Point your toes towards your body

Count 1...2...3...

Drop your legs and relax

### 3. Thinking about a place that makes you feel calm

- Thinking about a place that makes you feel calm is also called visual imagery.
- To help you think about a place that makes you feel calm, you could look at a picture, and think about what it would feel like to be there.
- This can make you feel relaxed and help you to stop thinking about the things that make you feel worried, anxious and stressed.

You can find a picture yourself or you could ask someone to help you find a picture that makes you feel calm.

Pretend you are in this picture:





- how do you feel?
- what can you see around you?
- what can you feel under your feet? Can you feel grass?
- does it feel warm?
- what can you smell?
- do you feel calmer now?



Here are some more examples:

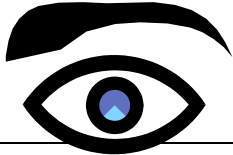





Pretend you are in this picture...

	What can you see?	
	What can you feel?	
	What can you smell?	
	What can you hear?	
	What can you taste?	

Pretend you are in this picture...

 <p>What can you see?</p>	
 <p>What can you feel?</p>	
 <p>What can you smell?</p>	
 <p>What can you hear?</p>	
 <p>What can you taste?</p>	

Pretend you are in this picture...

 <p>What can you see?</p>	
 <p>What can you feel?</p>	
 <p>What can you smell?</p>	
 <p>What can you hear?</p>	
 <p>What can you taste?</p>	

Pretend you are in this picture...



What can you see?



What can you feel?



What can you smell?



What can you hear?



What can you taste?



## Other things you can do to relax



- Exercise makes you feel relaxed and can also help to meet new people. For example, you could go walking, dancing or swimming.



- Have a warm bath with bubbles. Lavender is soothing and will help you to feel calm, so you could put some lavender soap in the water.



- Think about things that make you laugh and feel happy.

This leaflet was created by the Aneurin Bevan Health Board Learning Disability Psychology Service

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