

Deep Breathing Script

Keeping your mouth closed, inhale and exhale deeply through your nose three times.

Now place your right hand on your stomach, just above your belly-button, and your left hand at the top of your chest.

Don't try to manipulate your breathing yet. Just notice where in your body it is coming from.

Now, take a long, slow, deep breath into your chest. Your left hand should rise, but your right hand should stay still.

Pause briefly, keeping your chest full, and then exhale slowly through your nose.

Notice which muscles are involved, the sensation of fullness at the pause, and the feeling of relaxation that comes with the slow, deliberate relapse of air.

Repeat this "chest breathing" three times.

Breathe in... hold...release.

In...hold...release.

In...hold...release.

Now take a break. Stop controlling your breathing and let it find its own rhythm and location.

Now take a long, slow, deep breath, this time into your stomach. Your right hand should rise while your left hand stays still. This may feel awkward at first, but be patient.

Repeat this belly breathing three times.

Breathe in... hold...release.

In...hold...release.

In...hold...release.

Take another break and let your breathing return to its natural state.

Program Goals:

1. To improve participants' awareness of personal relaxation techniques.
2. To improve participants' ability to utilize relaxation and visualization techniques.



The leader explains how relaxation and visualization are

beneficial for managing stress. Begin by telling group members Sit comfortably in a chair or lie in a comfortable position on the floor. Explain to participants that it's important for them to keep their muscles tensed for 5 to 10 seconds and then to release their tension and allow their muscles to go completely limp. Wait 20 to 30 seconds before shifting to the next muscle group. The group leader should say the following directions in a slow, soft, soothing repetitive voice. As the leader reads these instructions, wait 20 to 30 seconds before proceeding to the next muscle group.

Progressive Relaxation

- Wrinkle your forehead and brow. Release, enjoy the relaxed reaction, and go completely limp.
- Tense your eyes and face, squeezing the eyes very tightly. Release, enjoy the relaxed reaction, go completely limp. Let your eyes remain closed.
- Clench your jaw and press your tongue to the roof of your mouth. Release, enjoy the relaxed reaction, go completely limp.
- Now tense your neck by pressing your head backwards. Hold, then release, enjoy the relaxed reaction, go completely limp.

PINE FOREST

Today, we're going to walk in the woods. Let your mind begin to develop an image of a pine forest. Breathe in and pick up that wonderful aroma of pine. You've missed that smell. It's been a long time since you walked thru the pines.

A carpet has been created by fallen pine needles. This carpet feels dense and springy as you walk. You hear a few twigs crackle under your feet. You wonder what birds and little creatures are bothered by your entrance into their domain. A blue jay cackles at you and you accept it as a greeting. You begin to feel very welcome here.

You stop and put both hands against the trunk of one of these towering pines. Feel how rough its bark is. Feel its strength. Let your hands draw some of this strength into your body. Continue to be aware of the aroma of the trees. You may also notice other fragrances: that of fallen leaves or of the little brush growing close to the ground. The pungent odors may bring back memories of another time, another forest.

The sun is sparkling thru the branches. It seems to send many patterns all over the forest. Just watch as these patterns move and change as a slight breeze moves the branches.

The forest feels calm and serene. As you wander on, you begin to notice a sound. You realize that it is the soothing sound of running water. Soon a stream is there in front of you. Its swift motion reflects its need to carry the melting snows off into larger bodies of water.

Stoop down. Cup your hands. Drink deeply. You feel replenished by the pure cold water. It seems to flood your spirit, as well.

Sit down and lean back on a tree trunk. Feel the sun filter thru the leaves to warm you. Close your eyes and listen. Listen as the water hurries on, as it tumbles over rocks and old branches, as it carries along sand and pebbles. Really hear the roar that only moving water can make.

Feel the rejuvenation that the moisture in the air brings you.



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Human Kinetics / Excerpts

Relaxation techniques

By Dr. Steven Blair, Dr. Brenda Wright, Walter Ettinger

Everyone feels tense from time to time. When you do, practice one of these relaxation techniques. As with any new habit, you must practice these techniques to get a benefit.

- **Deep-breathing exercises**—You've heard this before: Take a deep breath and relax. Taking more than one deep breath is even better. Begin by breathing in slowly and deeply through your nose. While breathing in, count to five and silently say the word "in" to yourself. Notice that your abdomen relaxes as your lungs fill with air. After the count of five, slowly let the air out as you count to five and say the word "out" to yourself. Repeat the exercise for at least five minutes. You may do these exercises while sitting, standing, or lying down. For best results, get comfortable by loosening your tie, belt, or buttons. A quiet place is recommended, but not necessary. Deep breathing is the first step of many relaxation techniques, so practice and learn to do it anywhere.
- **Visualization**—Begin with a few minutes of deep breathing. Then close your eyes and create a mental image of a scene in which you are perfectly relaxed. Imagine that you are walking in a rain forest, sailing on a boat in the ocean, or overlooking over a beautiful valley from the top of a mountain. Continue to breathe deeply. Involve all your senses in escaping to your special place. What sounds do you hear? How does the air smell and feel on your skin? Are you feeling as relaxed as if you were really there? Visualization gives your mind a rest when you are feeling stressed. Many people say that some of their most creative ideas and solutions come after visualizations.
- **Progressive muscle relaxation**—At first, you should do this technique while lying down. Choose a quiet place where you will not be disturbed for at least 20 minutes. Begin with deep-breathing exercises. Try to relax your entire body. Starting at your feet and working up your body, contract each muscle group tightly as you inhale. Hold the contraction for a few seconds; then exhale and relax. Let the tension flow out with each breath. Notice the feel of the muscles as they contract and relax. Move up the body from the feet to the calves, thighs, buttocks, abdomen, hands, arms, and shoulders. End with the muscles of the face, mouth, jaw, eyes, and scalp. Allow more time for the relaxation phase of the exercise. If a muscle seems particularly tense, repeat the contraction for that muscle group. When you finish, lie very still for at least five minutes. (You may want to include a visualization exercise at this time.) When you are ready to get up, count backward from 10 to 1. Get up slowly and carefully. Do progressive muscle relaxation daily for best results. With practice, you can learn to do progressive muscle relaxation while sitting in a chair.
- **Stretching**—Most people hold tension in their head, neck, and shoulder areas (called the stress triangle). The base of the triangle is the midpoint between your shoulders and neck. The top of the triangle is on your forehead between your eyes. Stretching can help relieve tension in your stress triangle. Stop and do a few stretches, especially when you are doing a tedious task. More about stretching is provided in chapter 10.

Overhead stretch—With one arm, reach up as if you were reaching for an object on a high shelf. Repeat with the other arm.

Shoulder shrugs—Lift your shoulders up and make large circles going forward and backward. You can rotate both shoulders or stretch one at a time.

Neck roll—Keep your left shoulder level while stretching the right ear to the right shoulder. Roll your head down so that your chin is on your chest. Repeat the stretch with your left side. Do not let your head drop back.

- **Self-massage**—You can learn to give yourself a massage. Massage relaxes muscles, relieves pain, increases blood flow to the skin and muscles, eases mental stress, and helps you feel more relaxed.

Shoulder and back of neck—Massage your stress triangle, using your left hand to work on your right shoulder and your right hand to work on your left shoulder. Begin at your shoulder blade and move up toward the back of your neck, including the scalp. Use a circular motion to massage the thickest part of the muscle. Repeat several times on both sides. Some health and wellness stores sell a device called a back buddy, an S-shaped item made of tubular plastic with a few knobs on it. You can use it to apply pressure to your neck and back and work on the areas where muscles feel tight.

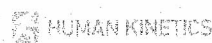
Head and face—Use your fingers to apply pressure on your forehead between your eyes (the top point of your stress triangle). Use your thumbs to apply gentle pressure on the areas below your brow bone close to your nose. Use gentle circular motions to rub the area of your temples and behind your ears. Rub your scalp with a gentle and rapid motion as though you are shampooing your hair.

Feet—Use your thumbs to rub the full length of your foot, from the heel to the toes and back. Rub each toe individually. Hold your ankle in one hand and your toes in the other. Rotate your foot at the ankle in both directions.

Massage is not a substitute for medical treatment for an injury. See your doctor if you have an injury, such as a sprain, tendonitis, or a swollen joint.

This is an excerpt from *Fitness After 50*.

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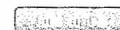
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Relaxation Exercises

These exercises are designed to help reduce stress and anger and to help with coping. You need to practice these for them to work.

Relaxed Breathing

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position in a quiet area.
- Take a slow, easy, deep breath in through your nose for a count of five (1-2-3-4-5).
- While inhaling, imagine the inhaled air as being clean, crisp, and cleansing.
- Exhale slowly for a count of five (1-2-3-4-5).
- While exhaling, visualize all stress leaving your body and let your body go limp and relaxed from head to toe.
- Repeat these steps 3 or 4 times until you feel relaxed.



Progressive Relaxation

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position in a quiet area.
- Start with your feet. Think about your feet becoming relaxed and release any tension out of them. When they feel relaxed continue.
- Now move on to your legs. Think about your legs becoming relaxed and release any tension out of them. When they feel relaxed continue.
- Now your torso. Think about your torso becoming relaxed and release any tension out of it. When your torso feels relaxed continue.
- Your arms. Think about your arms becoming relaxed and release any tension out of them. When they feel relaxed continue.
- Your neck. Think about your neck becoming relaxed and release any tension out of it. When it feels relaxed continue.
- Your head. Think about your head becoming relaxed and release any tension out of it. When it feels relaxed continue.
- If done correctly you should barely feel your body and may even fall asleep!



Mental Imagery

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position in a quiet area.
- Close your eyes.
- Picture yourself someplace calm and peaceful. Select a favorite spot you went to in the past. Maybe it is a lake or mountain you formerly went to.
- Think about that special place...
 - How the sun feels...
 - How the wind feels...
 - How it smells...
 - How the scenery looks...
- Remain in this calm, relaxed place for several minutes.

Relaxation When You're on the Go

Try these and find one that works for you:

- Picture yourself in a warm bath.
- Wiggle your toes in your shoes, alternating contractions with relaxation.
- Picture yourself in the glow of a warm, soothing sunbeam.
- Picture a clear protective shield that surrounds you and protects you from stress.
- Say to yourself "Relax," slow your breathing, be calm, and be centered.

Spiritual Health Strategies

- Refresh your spirit through religious practices or experiences.
- Listen to beautiful music.
- Read an uplifting poem or story.
- Listen to an inspirational speaker.
- Sit quietly by the beach, in a wooded area, or even in your yard—Enjoy the nature around you.