



RELAXATION THERAPY

1. Focusing

Pick out a small personal object that you enjoy, like a piece of jewelry or a flower. Focus all your attention on this object as you inhale and exhale slowly and deeply for 1-2 minutes. Try not to let any other thoughts enter your mind. If they do, simply refocus on the object.

2. Meditation

Sit or lie in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and begin a slow, relaxed breathing. Focus all attention on your breathing. When you inhale say “peace” to yourself and when you exhale say “calm.” Draw out the word so it lasts an entire breath. Continue this exercise until you feel relaxed.

3. Oak Tree

Sit comfortably, arms at your sides. Close your eyes, breathe slowly. See your body as a strong oak tree. Imagine strong roots growing down into the ground to anchor you so you can handle any stress. If uncomfortable thoughts break through, again imagine yourself as the strong oak tree.

4. Grounding Cord

Sit in a comfortable position, arms at your sides, eyes closed, breathe deeply. Imagine a thick wide cord attached to the base of your spine. This is your grounding cord. Use an image that evokes strength, like a tree trunk or a thick cable. Imagine the cord to be wide and sturdy. Imagine a metal hook is at the end of the cord and this hook falls 200 feet into the bedrock of the earth. Continue to breathe deeply and visualize how sturdy and grounded that cord makes you feel.

5. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Lie on your back in a comfortable position. Allow your arms to rest at your sides, palms down. Inhale and exhale slowly and deeply. Clench your hands into fists and hold tight for 15 seconds, relaxing the rest of your body. Then let your hands relax. Now tense and relax the rest of your body in this order: face, shoulders, back, stomach, pelvis, legs, feet and toes. Hold for 15 seconds and relax for 30 seconds when going from area to area. Finish the exercise by imagining the remaining tension flowing out of your fingertips.

6. Erasing Stress

Sit or lie in a comfortable position. Breathe slowly and deeply. Visualize a situation, a person, or even a belief (such as “I’m afraid to speak to others.”) that causes anxiety or fear. You may see a very specific situation in which this may happen and cause a great deal of anxiety. Imagine a large eraser, like a chalkboard eraser, floats into your hand. Take the eraser and rub it over the stressful picture until it disappears from your thoughts. When you can no longer see the stressful picture, simply continue to focus on your deep breathing for another minute, inhaling and exhaling slowly and deeply.