

RELAXATION EXERCISE

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<https://melborins.bandcamp.com/album/relaxation-exercise>

(adapted from *An Apple A Day-A Holistic Health Primer*)

We live in an environment that is very stressful and it is important to regularly loosen the muscles of your body and experience a state of relaxation, both of the mind and body.

Here is a simple exercise, adapted from Dr. Edmond Jacobsen and Dr. Carl Simonton that you can integrate into your life. The more you practice the better you will become.

1 Find a comfortable and quiet place.

Find a room where you will be free from interruptions and noise for about 20-30 minutes.

POSITIONING

2 Choose a sitting or lying position that feels easy.

Sit in a firm chair, feet flat on the floor, straight back and symmetrical in your posture. If you choose to lie down, lie on the floor and not in bed. This exercise is not meant to put you to sleep, but to achieve deep mental and physical relaxation

BREATHING AWARENESS

3 Close your eyes, think inward and concentrate on your breathing.

Notice when you breathe in and out.

Notice how much your chest moves as you breathe in and out.

Notice how your chest rises as you breathe in and falls when you breathe out.

Notice how much your abdomen moves with each breath.

Notice the air passing in and out through your nose and mouth.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

4 Starting at your toes invite each part of your body, one by one to let go.

Loosen the muscles of your **toes**. Wiggle them and let them go.

Loosen the muscles of your **calves** and **thighs**. Allow them to go limp and loose. Let gravity pull them to the floor. Imagine your legs are like spaghetti, stringy and loose.

Loosen the muscles of your **pelvis**. Let go of the muscles around your anus and genitals. Feel them releasing.

While holding your spine straight, feel the muscles of your lower **back**, middle back and upper back go loose. Imagine you are exhaling the air from your lungs out through the muscles of your back and pelvis.

Loosen the muscles of your tummy. Allow your breath to reach your **abdomen** and let your abdominal muscles move with each breath in and out.

With slow deep breaths let go of the muscles of your **chest**. Feel the muscles give way with every breath out. Picture yourself breathing the air out through your heart and chest. Notice how calm you feel and how easy you are breathing.

Feel your **heart** beating gently and easily.

Relax your **shoulders** and upper arms. Let the muscles of your **arms** and **hands** go limp like jelly. Allow them to feel heavy and loose.

Loosen the muscles of your **neck**.

While holding your neck straight, let go of the muscles of your **head** and scalp. Loosen the muscles around your eyes, mouth, jaw, and forehead and feel your **face** smooth out.

As you exhale imagine breathing the air out through the top of your head, and through your eyes and ears.

With each breath you will become more and more relaxed and more and more comfortable. You will become calmer and calmer. Concentrate your full thoughts on your breathing and relaxed muscles.

VISUALIZATION AND GUIDED IMAGERY

While you are in this quiet relaxed state **imagine a comfortable, relaxing scene from the past**. It is like looking at old photos. Choose one that you find particularly relaxing and instead of seeing it in your mind jump into the scene and imagine you are part of it.

See the colours, shapes, shadows of the scene. Hear the sounds or silence, smell the smells, taste the tastes and have all the pleasurable feeling that you remember from that scene.

Choose any scene you wish. You might imagine lying on the soft sand of the beach, a gentle breeze tickling your body, the warm sun beating on your skin, hearing the waves washing back and forth, on the shore. Or you might imagine a warm bubble bath, nice and comfortable, the warm water supporting your muscles. Or you can imagine walking freely in the woods on a bright spring day, enjoying the fresh air, the birds chirping and the feeling of new life all around. You can use whichever scene you find relaxing.

Imagine you are there now. Picture it in your mind; enjoy the scene and experience the pleasurable feelings. Immerse yourself in relaxation and enjoyment. Make use of your eyes, your ears, your nose, your tongue, your feelings, and higher senses to fantasize the experience fully.

The most important factor that will determine how well you do is your willingness to make the time each day that is necessary in your life to commit to relaxing. It is best if you choose a specific time each day like brushing your teeth or before going to bed. The intention is to experience deep moments of relaxation and not go to sleep. With practice you will fall more easily and quickly into a relaxed state.

Whenever you choose you can awaken yourself by counting backwards from 3 to 1.