



Relaxation Techniques

Apps

Breathe2Relax

Practice slowing your breathing down and extending your inhale

headspace

Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind is a mindfulness app with a number of different audio scripts to help you develop your mindfulness skills

Learning to relax your body can have a positive influence over your mind and overall wellbeing. Relaxation can be an effective way of dealing with stress and anxiety. Experiment with different relaxation techniques and then keep practising the ones that suit you best.

While the causes of stress may be complex and varied, the techniques to relax and de-stress can be simple to learn. Below are some suggestions to help you begin to develop a relaxation routine which you enjoy and will want to practice. Different methods suit different situations and different people, so it's a good idea to try a few different types of strategies.

Develop your own relaxation practice

There are many different types of relaxation techniques. They can involve breath control, visualisations, tensing and relaxing muscle groups, listening to music or focusing the mind. Try out several techniques until you are clear what you like and then use the relaxation routine that works for you.

For any relaxation exercise, you will need to be in a comfortable position and it is best to avoid interruptions. Suggested body positions include:

- Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor and hands resting on your knees with palms facing upwards.
- Lie on your back on the floor with your feet slightly apart and arms close to, but not touching, your sides with palms upwards.
- Lie on your back with your legs drawn up so that your knees are resting gently against one another and your feet are turned inwards and slightly splayed apart.

Try some of these relaxation exercises

1 Slowing your breathing rate

This encourages deep breathing allowing more oxygen to get to the extreme points of your body, increasing circulation.

2 Visualisation

Create a visual picture in your mind of a calming place you have been to. You might combine this with deep breathing and visualise 'blue' breath going in your nose and circulating around your body before being exhaled as 'red'.

3 Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Tense and release different muscle groups in your body, working your way through from your head to your toes, or your toes to your head.

4 Mindfulness

Concentrate on the present moment by using your senses to connect with it.

If you are feeling overwhelmed by stress it may be difficult to use relaxation practices without assistance. If you find your level of tension is high and you cannot relax, consider having a chat with a counsellor.

For more relaxation exercise or other skills training contact [University Counselling](#).