

# Learn How To Relax!

Try this exercise to slow down your breathing, your heart beats, and even your blood pressure! You can make your body feel just like it does when you're about to fall asleep, or when you're very relaxed.

## Step 1: Focusing



Pick a nice quiet place where you like to hang out alone. You can choose to focus on your own breath or on a part of your body. Keep focused while you slowly and deeply breathe in and out. See if your stomach seems to bulge out when breathing in — (and then you empty it all out) for one to two minutes. Try not to let any other thoughts or feelings enter your mind. If they do, just return your attention to your breathing or on a part of your body. At the end of this exercise, you will probably feel more peaceful and calm.

## Step 2: Meditation

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position.
- Close your eyes and breathe deeply (for five counts in and five out).



- Let your breathing be slow and relaxed. Focus all your attention on your breathing. Notice the movement of your chest and abdomen in and out. Repeat at least 3 times.
- Block out all other thoughts, feelings, and sensations. If you feel your attention wandering, bring it back to your breathing.
- Continue this exercise until you feel very relaxed.

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## Step 3: Relaxation



- Lie on your back in a comfortable position. Allow your arms to rest at your sides, palm down, on the surface next to you. You can put some music on, really low, something without a lot of words.

Music can have a relaxing effect on our minds and bodies. This type of music can slow your pulse and heart rate, lower your blood pressure, and decrease your levels of stress. Nature sounds, such as ocean waves and rainfall, can also be relaxing.

- Clench your hands (first your right, then your left) into fists and hold them tightly for 15 seconds. As you do this, relax the rest of your body.
- Then let your hands relax. On relaxing, see a golden light flowing into the entire body, making all your muscles soft and pliable.
- Now, tense and relax the following parts of your body in this order: face, shoulders, back, stomach, pelvis, legs, feet, and toes. Hold each part tensed for 15 seconds and then relax your body for 30 seconds before going on to the next part. If you're at one of your tense spots, hold and release that part twice.
- Finish the exercise by shaking your hands and imagining any remaining tension flowing out of your fingertips.

## Now You're Ready to Try it at Home!

Try each exercise at least once at home. Then find the combination that works for you. Doing the exercise you most enjoy should take no longer than 20 to 30 minutes, depending on how much time you wish to spend. Ideally, you should do the exercises daily. Your ability to relax and to cope with stress will improve tremendously!



*Resource: C.A.T. Project.*

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