

## Relaxation Exercises

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At times, it may be hard to relax due to worry and stress. Being able to relax can make you feel better and help you let go of physical and emotional stress. Relaxation can lead to a feeling of peacefulness. There are different ways to relax. It is important that you find the ways that work best for you. Here are some ideas to help you get started.

### Music

Many people have favorite music that helps them relax. Choose music that soothes you. Music played by itself or used with other forms of relaxation can be very calming.

### Physical Exercise

Exercise is a good way to lower stress. It can help release muscle tension in your body. This can help you prepare for other relaxation exercises. Exercise releases natural body substances, called endorphins that help you create a feeling of well-being.

### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Some people are unable to relax due to muscle tension. Progressive muscle relaxation is a way to decrease tension in your muscles. This is done by making a muscle tense, and then relaxing it. This is repeated using different muscles in your body.

### Breathing Exercises

You may notice that you forget to breathe when you are tense. Breathing exercises can be used to help reduce your stress. For more information, ask a member of your health care team for the patient education handout, **Non-Drug Pain Relief: Relaxation with Breathing Exercises**.

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**This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

## Positive Thoughts

Tension can be created by negative thoughts or beliefs. If you have negative thoughts, try to replace them with positive statements such as:

- I am doing the best that I can.
- I respect myself.
- I care for my well-being.

## Imagery Exercises

Imagery exercises can be used to create a thought or image to distract you from stress. For example:

- Think of a time and place when you felt safe and comfortable. Imagine those surroundings, the sights, the smells and the sounds. Bring as much of that experience back to the here and now. When you feel ready, take a deep breath and open your eyes.

## Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy uses essential oils from plants to help support emotional, physical or spiritual well-being. Essential oils may help control symptoms such as insomnia, pain, nausea, fatigue or loss of appetite.

## Where can I find more information on relaxation exercises?

To listen to free audio recordings for guided imagery, mindfulness practices and relaxation techniques, visit <https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/integrative-complementary-medicine/resources>.

Books and compact discs (CDs) on relaxation exercises can be found at libraries or bookstores. You may also find apps with this information for your electronic device.