

HOW TO RELAX

*This document has been produced by
Clyst Vale Community College
Counselling Service.*

This document will show you how to relax in 3 easy steps.

Why do I need to relax?

Everyone needs to relax, or have 'down time'. It helps the body recover and promotes well being. It can even boost your immune system.

I can't switch off!

Don't worry, this booklet will help you learn how to relax your body and calm your mind.

I can't sleep...

Learn to relax, and sleep will often follow...

Step 1 BEFORE YOU BEGIN

You can relax anywhere, but here are a few tips to help you get started.

- Find somewhere quiet.
- Look for a comfortable chair or bed.
- Turn off your mobile phone, and other distractions like a TV...
- Loosen your clothing, undo top buttons, belts and if you can, take your shoes off.
- Dim the lights, or turn them off.
- If you can, choose a place where you won't be disturbed.

Body Check

Lying down, or sitting up, it doesn't matter.

The legs:

- Close your eyes gently.
- Start with your feet. Curl your toes as tight as you can.
- Hold the tension in the muscles for a count of 3, then relax them.
- Repeat.
- Now tense your lower legs, your calf muscles, hold for 3 seconds and then relax them. Repeat.
- Now your thighs, and all of your leg. Tense them for 3 seconds, then relax. Repeat.

The arms:

- Make your hands into tight fists. Hold them tense for 3 seconds. Then relax. Repeat.
- Tense your whole arm, with hands in tight fists, hold the tension for 3 seconds. Relax. Repeat.

The shoulders:

- Bring both shoulders up to your ears, as high as you can. Hold for 3 seconds. Relax, and drop your shoulders down. Repeat.
- Gently shrug and move your shoulders, they should feel relaxed.

The face:

- Tighten your jaw, screw your face up, hold the tension for 3 seconds. Relax. Repeat.

Now gently shake out the remaining tension in your body.

Step 2 BREATHING

- Focus on your breathing.
- Slow your breathing right down.
- Breathe slowly in through your nose, and out through your mouth.
- Slightly tense your tummy as you control your breathing, it will help you take long, slow breaths.
- As you breathe in through your nose, count to 10 slowly in your mind. Keep inhaling very slowly till you reach 10.
- Start to breathe out through your mouth, very slowly and count to 10 again. Keep the air gently passing through your lips, like blowing through a straw.

Do this many times.

Step 3 EMPTY YOUR MIND

Now your breathing is under control, focus your thoughts on each moment you change breathing in or out.

Make the change as smooth and seamless as possible.

- Let your thoughts drift.
- Move on from any thoughts that disturb you.
- Enjoy any thoughts that please you.

At this point, many people enjoy imagining they are lying on a deserted beach, breathing in... breathing out... quite relaxed.

The more you practice, the easier it becomes to relax.