

## RELAXATION EXERCISES

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## Benefits of Relaxation

The opposite of the 'fight or flight' response:

- decrease in heart rate
- decrease in respiration rate
- lowered blood pressure
- reduced muscle tension
- increased oxygen supply

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## Exercise One: Breath Work

Dr. Andrew Weil's 4-7-8 Breath work

- Breathe in through your nose to the count of 4
- Hold to the count of 7
- Breath out through your mouth to the count of 8

*Repeat 4 times (twice per day)*

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## Exercise Two: Tense-Relax

- Clench your fists. While keeping them clenched, pull your forearms tightly up against your upper arms.
- While keeping those muscles tense, tense all the muscles in you legs.
- While keeping all those tense, clench your jaws and shut your eyes fairly tight...not too tightly.
- Now while holding all those tense, take a deep breath and hold it for 5 seconds...
- Then, let everything go all at once. Feel yourself letting go of all your tensions. Just enjoy that feeling for a minute as your muscles let go more and more.
- Just enjoy focusing, gently, on letting go.

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## Exercise Three: Peaceful Place Imagery

- Design a peaceful place, one you have been to or one of your imagining now
- Add details to your peaceful place:  
Are you alone or are there others present? What position are you in—standing, sitting, laying down? What do you see, visually, as you look around? What sounds do you hear or is it quiet and still? What familiar, soothing smells may be present? What textures do you feel on your hands, near your body as you relax?
- Close your eyes, take a slow deep breath and go inside to this place, enjoying the peace you find there.

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