Safeguarding
and Wellbeing

RELAXATION GUIDE

Start reading...

KEEP CALM AND RELAX

When someone feels anxious, their body reacts and enters a state call the fight-or-flight response. The body thinks it is in danger and prepares to either fight or run away.

You might feel:

- A “blank” mind
- Increased heart rate
- Sweating
- Tense muscles
- Rapid breathing

Unfortunately, what might cause anxiety in today’s world aren’t helped much by these physical reactions. We can learn techniques to calm the fight-or-flight response before the symptoms get too strong/ If we practice these skills ahead of time, we are more ready when we need them.

Need a quick reset? This five-minute meditation video can help you pause, refocus, and return to your day feeling refreshed:

Meditation Video

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Deep breathing

When you're relaxed, you take long, deep breaths. But, when you're stressed or anxious, your breathing becomes quick and shallow.

Find out more

Imagery

Think about a place you feel safe and happy. If you focus enough on this place, it can trigger emotions you associate with that place.

Progressive muscle relaxation

When we feel stressed, our muscle tense up, which can cause stiffness or pain, especially in the back.

We recommend downloading the Wisdom app, you will have access to 24/7 live chat counselling, self-help tools and wellbeing resources - **Wisdom App**

Code to register - **MHA339939**

DEEP BREATHING

When you're relaxed, take long, deep breaths. But, when you're stressed or anxious, your breathing becomes quick and shallow. Deep breathing helps reverse this by sending signals to your brain to calm down your body. With practice, deep breathing will become more effective over time.
You can sit cross-legged if that's comfortable, lie on your back with your knees raised, or sit in a chair that supports your back. To practice:

Step 1:
Breathe in slowly through your nose, counting to 5 in your head. Notice how the air feels filling your lungs.

Step 2:
Hold your breath and count from 5 to 10 seconds,. You don't want to be uncomfortable but make it last longer than a normal breath.

Step 3:
Slowly breathe out, counting between 5 to 10 seconds. To help slow down, imagine you are blowing into a straw or blowing out a candle. You can practice with a real straw if its is helpful.

Step 4:
Repeat the process until you feel calm.

IMAGERY

Think about a place you feel safe and happy. If you focus enough on this place, it can trigger emotions you associate with that place – calming the mind. Our brains can create emotional reactions just from our thoughts.

Find a quiet spot with little noise or distractions. You can lie on your back with your knees raised or sit in a chair that supports your back.

Now, think of a place you love or calming place. It could be the beach, a mountain, your home, or playing with a pet.

Picture this place clearly in your mind, focusing on all the details. Use all your senses to imagine the experience.

For example, if you're imagining a beach:

Sight – the sun is shining; you're surrounded by white sand. The water is greenish blue, with gentle waves.
Sound – you hear waves crashing and seagulls in the distance.
Touch – the sun feels warm, but a cool breeze keeps you comfortable. You can feel the sand between your toes.
Taste – you have a refreshing glass of lemonade, sweet, and tart.
Smell – you can smell the salty ocean air, full of calming scents.

Yake your time and really focus on how each sense feels in your relaxing place. You can even practice bringing this place to mind by sketching what it looks like – again focusing on the details. The better you can visualise this place, the easier it is for you to picture it when you are feeling anxious and start causing your brain to feel calm.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

When we feel stressed, our muscles tense up, which can cause stiffness or pain, especially in the back or neck. Progressive muscle relaxation helps us become more aware of this tension so we can manage stress better.

Find a quiet, private place where you can sit or lie down comfortably.

The goal of this technique is to tense each muscle, then release the tension.

Let's start with your feet:

1. Curl your toes to tense the muscles. Hold the tension for 5 seconds and notice how it feels.
2. Relax your toes and notice how they feel different.
3. Now, tense your calf muscles for 5 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of tension.
4. Release the tension in your calves and notice how the relaxation feels.

Continue this pattern of tensing and releasing as you move up your body. Work your way through your thighs, buttocks, stomach, chest, arms, fingers, neck, ears, and face.