

Relaxation Handout

Remember to breathe naturally (like a baby) into your diaphragm: in through your nose out through your pursed lips. Do this in between exercises.

Relaxation begins by (paradoxically) increasing the tension first, then “letting go.” Tense each muscle group for five seconds. Notice the contrast between the feelings of tension and of relaxation.

Remember to begin “at the bottom”:

1. Lift your legs. Point your toes away from you, then toward your face. Feel the tension in your calves. Tighten your thighs and buttocks, hold and relax.
2. Arch our back (omit this if you have back problems), tightening muscles; take a deep breathe into your chest. Hold, and relax. Tighten your stomach, hold and relax.
3. Make a fists, tighten your forearms and biceps (make a Charles Atlas pose): Hold , and relax. Hunch your neck and shoulders (like a turtle): hold, let go, and roll your neck around.
4. Finally, make a ugly face. Tighten your chin, mouth, lips, nose, eyes forehead and scalp. Hold, then relax.
5. Let your lips go loose and blow air through them. (Make a “horsey” sound).

To practice the visualization, remember to

1. Walk along the street to the woods.
2. Find the path through the trees to the clearing.
3. Relax in your “perfect spot.”
4. Go to the stream and let your thoughts go, down the stream, to the river, and down to the sea.