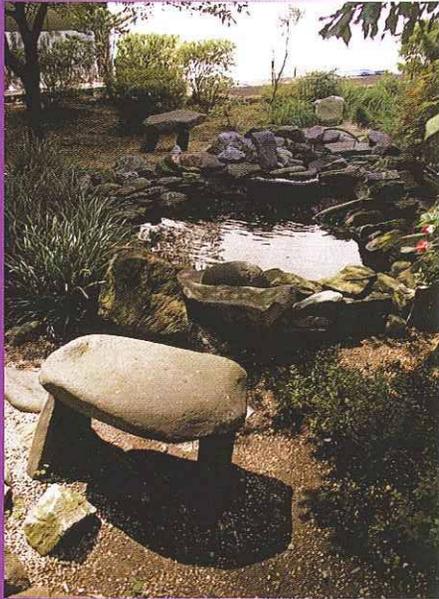


relaxation tips



Relaxing your body and calming your mind is an important part of staying healthy. Research shows that the mind and body are connected and that our thoughts and emotions affect how we react to the things that cause us stress.

Simple relaxation techniques can help you feel calm and comfortable. This will allow you to gain a greater sense of well being.

Here are some easy techniques you can practice now or in your home or office to feel more refreshed, relaxed and peaceful. Pick and choose the technique(s) that work best for you. With a little practice, the technique(s) will become easy to use.

Focused Breathing

In this exercise, you think about a word while you exhale or breathe out to help you to feel calm and centered. Take your time as you practice this exercise. Slow and easy breaths work best. Breathe in and out through your nose or mouth—whichever is the most comfortable for you. You can also close your eyes to lessen the distractions around you.

1. Choose a word or short phrase that is relaxing or comforting for you. Examples include words like “peace,” “relax,” “calm”.
2. Breathe in slowly and naturally.
3. As you breathe out, say the word to yourself.
4. Take your time as you breathe in and out. Make sure you breathe in fully and out fully.
5. When other thoughts come to mind, just bring your focus back to your word or phrase.
6. Continue this for at least a few minutes, and repeat several times a day.

This technique is easy to use anywhere and anytime. Explore the possibilities!

Squeeze Your Fist

Tightening and relaxing your muscles can help to relax your body.

1. Make a fist with your hand.
2. Squeeze this fist for 5 seconds.
3. Slowly open and relax one finger at a time, until your hand is completely relaxed. Feel the tension flow out of your fingertips.
4. Rest and relax your hand for 10-15 seconds.
5. Repeat five times.

Imagine a Relaxing Place

Imagery is a technique that uses sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and feelings to help you to relax.

1. Imagine yourself in a place that is relaxing and calming for you. This can be a place you’ve been to or someplace you would like to go. Examples include the beach, mountains, sitting in your favorite chair, by a fire or being with a pet, family member or friend.
2. Think about what you see, hear, feel, taste and smell.
3. As you think about these sights, sounds, feelings, tastes and smells, allow this place to become very real. If your mind wanders bring it back by focusing on your relaxing place. You will feel more and more relaxed as your imagery deepens.