



Autogenic Relaxation

We know that our body is constantly responding to what is going on in our minds. Autogenic relaxation is a method of “suggesting” different feelings so that we feel more relaxed. This type of relaxation can reduce our pulse and blood pressure and it can reverse the symptoms of stress and tension that often accompany chronic pain.

Like all relaxation methods, it takes time to learn and, the more you practise, the more skilled you will become. You can listen to an audio version of the script below, here: <https://soundcloud.com/kyoh-1/relaxation-3>

So – to begin, get yourself into a comfortable position. At home, you may choose to relax lying down or with your feet elevated. Those with back pain may like lying down with their lower legs on a low table or a chair or sofa – so that they are “chair shaped”. This takes some of the tension off the lower back and is a comfortable position.

Script

When you are ready and comfortable, just allow your eyes to close, if you are happy to do so.

And let's begin by focusing on your breathing. Just being aware of breathing in cooler air and breathing out slightly warmer air... aware of the cooler air passing over your nostrils and the back of your throat as you breathe in, and as you breathe out... slightly warmer air... notice that as you breathe out, with each out-breath, you breathe away the tension.

And as you breathe in... imagine taking the in breath right up to the top of your head... and as you breathe out allowing the breath to travel through your body and out of your feet... and letting the breath become one nice smooth, circular rhythm.

And now just focusing all your attention on your right arm,... so just thinking about your right arm now... and for your next few out breaths... each time you breathe out... think to yourself... my right arm is heavy and warm.... my right arm is heavy and warm. And if you want to, you can imagine someone gently pressing down on your right arm and the sun shining through the window and warming the skin on your arm...

And now focusing on your left arm... just thinking about your left arm and for the next few out-breaths, each time you breathe out, think to yourself... my left arm is feeling heavy and warm... with each out-breath... my left arm is heavy and warm, and, if you want to – picture that in your mind's eye.

Good, you're doing very well. Now just note how your arms and your hands feel as a result of doing that... and if you notice any changes in sensation, just allow those sensations to happen... any tingling or feelings of lightness in your arms or your hands mean that you are allowing yourself to relax and that is perfectly normal.

And now... focus on your right leg... so just thinking about your right leg now and we'll do the same again. So for your next few out breaths, each time you breathe out... think to yourself... my right leg is heavy and warm. With each out-breath... my right leg is heavy and warm and just allow your leg to respond to that. And again, if it's easier for you... just imagining that someone is very gently pressing down on your right leg... and the sun is shining in through the window warming the skin on your right leg and right foot ... and just allowing your leg to respond to that.

And now focusing on your left leg... so just thinking about your left leg now and with each out-breath, each time you breathe out thinking to yourself ... my left leg is feeling heavy and warm. With each out breath... my left leg is heavy and warm. And just allowing your leg to respond to that.



And now for your next few out breaths... each time you breathe out, think to yourself... I'm feeling heavy – and warm – and relaxed. Allowing the chair or the floor to fully support you.

And now going off in your mind to somewhere you would like to be right now... somewhere warm and sunny, or maybe in front of a lovely crackling log fire, somewhere you feel happy... and warm, peaceful... and relaxed and spend a few minutes in this nice, warm, peaceful place.

And now just going back to focusing on your breathing again... just becoming aware of your breathing... and noticing that with each in-breath, each time you breathe in... becoming more aware of your surroundings and... more aware of being in the room... with each in breath ... more alert. And counting the next 5 in breaths, feeling more alert, and on your 5th in breath, open your eyes. And open and close your hands move and stretch if you want to – just to cancel any feelings of heaviness.