



Pillar B6

Practice relaxation and meditation

Relaxation is not something that you “do”. It is a natural response that you allow to happen. Relaxation is what is left when you stop creating tension.

The ability to relax can be very helpful for everyone. It is especially useful and effective when dealing with the problems associated with chronic pain.

Getting wound up and tense can make existing pain worse. It can create more pain such as headaches, neck pain and low back pain. This can lead to a vicious cycle of:

Chronic pain → tension → more pain → more tension

Relaxation can help you to reduce tension and stop your pain from getting worse.

- Chronic pain often results in distress, irritability and feeling helpless. All these feelings make it harder to cope with your pain. **Relaxation will help you to cope better with pain**
- It can be difficult to fall asleep if you are in pain or feeling tense. You might also wake several times a night and find it hard to drop off again. **Relaxation can help you fall asleep and to get back to sleep if you waken**
- You might be taking sleeping pills or tranquilisers to help you relax. These types of medication are meant for short term use only. They can be difficult to stop taking and they can make matters worse in the long-term. **Relaxation is more useful and healthier than long term use of medication to make you sleep.**
- You might have tried relaxation in past and had some difficulty with it. You may feel that you have “never been able to relax”. Don’t worry, relaxation is a skill. The more you practise, the more effective it will be. **Relaxation improves with practise.**

How to relax

It is very useful if you have some activities that you relax you. A quiet walk, listening to music, reading a good book or a hobby that you can become engrossed in. These things can distract you and make you feel a little more relaxed. However, **relaxation is what happens when we stop creating tension. Relaxation happens when we stop doing and just start being.**

Once you have learned to relax, you can combine relaxation with activity. As you become more skilled you will be able to walk and move in a more relaxed way and you will be able to quieten your mind when it “just won’t switch off”.

Good positions for relaxation

Lying on the floor in the “dead body” position is good for those who can manage it. Lying on your back, with your arms resting on the floor, palms facing upwards, legs slightly apart and feet relaxed.

For those with back pain, lying on the floor with your lower legs supported on a stool/chair/sofa (so you are “chair shaped”) can reduce pain in the back.

Sitting – choose a chair that supports your head ensure that your feet are flat on the floor.

These positions support your body so that you can allow your muscles to relax.

Practise the following steps whenever you get 5 minutes:

1. Let your eyes close if you are happy to do so. Otherwise, let your eyes focus on an object in front of you
2. Take a normal breath in and let it out slowly. Say the word “calm” to yourself in your imagination as you breathe out.
3. Be aware of your breathing. Notice the calm, slow rhythm or focus on the sound of your breath.
4. Imagine a peaceful happy scene. For example: remember the nicest place you ever went on holiday and take yourself back there in your imagination. Or make up a place where you would like to be right now and create that scene in your mind.

Being realistic: Make time to practise, you may not become highly skilled straight away.

Check your level of tension by scanning your body. Ask “where am I creating tension?” check your forehead, eyes, and shoulders. Check your sitting and standing position and adjust your body to let go of any unnecessary tension.

Some common difficulties with Relaxation Practice

Falling asleep – Ideally it is best to stay awake so that you can learn the technique. However, it is OK if you fall asleep because this shows how good relaxation is for sleep problems.

It takes practise to allow yourself to relax. You can't TRY to relax, you let relaxation happen.

Pain interrupting – The choices are either to change position or relax with the pain for a while and see if it passes or reduces. Do what you need to do to be comfortable. It may be easier to relax with a dull ache than with a sharp stabbing pain. You be the judge. It's important to slow your out-breath down and focus on breathing out gently if pain disturbs you. Never hold your breath with pain.

Panic or feeling fearful – This is fairly common if you are not used to relaxing. Feeling panicky is unpleasant but it soon passes. Again, it is vital to slow down your out-breaths. Feel the chair or the floor or bed supporting you and tell yourself that you are safe in the room. Tell yourself: "I am OK, I can slow my breathing, I am safe, this will soon pass". Learning relaxation skills, especially controlled breathing skills, will soon enable you to feel in control of panic or anxiety.

Mind wandering off, not being able to stay focused – This is common when you are learning relaxation. Practise simple techniques, such as focusing on your breathing for one minute several times a day. You will soon get used to focusing on just one thing. When you are relaxing and your mind wanders off, just notice what happened and gently bring your attention back to what you are doing. Stay in the present.

Remember that relaxation is a skill. It takes time to learn any skill and relaxation is no exception. We can help you to overcome difficulties that you might have learning, so let us know if you have any problems during relaxation so that we can help you.

TRUE REST

Another technique that can be very useful to help with pain and fatigue is "true rest". This involves using pillows to place all of your joints in "mid-range" where they are in the least strained position. It can feel very relaxing and help you let go of all tension. As with other relaxation techniques, you need to have a comfortable and peaceful environment.

"True rest" also involves trying not to think about anything at all for a short time, because even using relaxation techniques can require some mental energy. Again, this can be very relaxing and can "re-charge your battery" giving you a boost of energy.

You may only need to use this technique for about 5 minutes, but you could use it more than once a day.



RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Diaphragmatic Breathing

During stressful events the breathing rate increases. By using diaphragmatic breathing the rate can be brought under control.

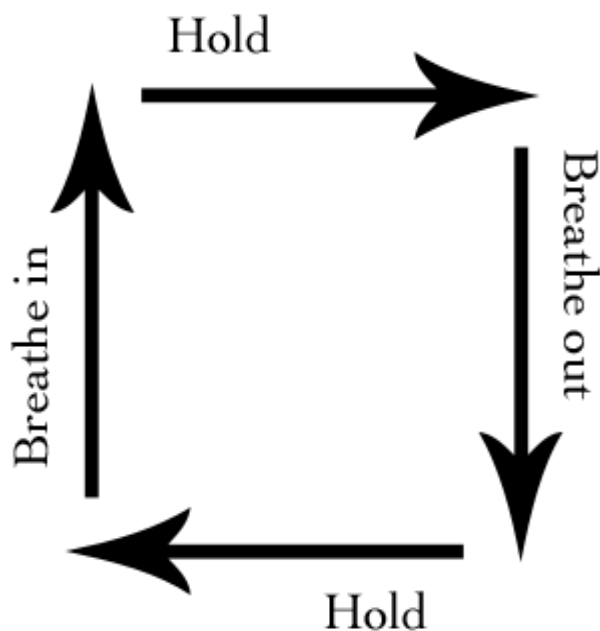
Diaphragmatic breathing needs to be practised to gain most benefit. It can be performed at any time and in any place.

- Begin in a comfortable position – sitting, standing or lying down with knees bent and feet flat on the bed.
- Think about your breathing pattern. Think about the speed and depth of your breaths.
- How tense are the muscles at the back of your neck and over your shoulders? Is your jaw clenched? Shoulders hunched? Try and let that tension go.
- Slow down the rate of your breathing. Take time and concentrate.
- Reduce the effort you are using.
- Place your hand(s) gently on your stomach.

- Take an easy, slow, deep breath in through your nose and let the air glide slowly down into your “stomach” and feel your hand(s) rise gently as they rest on your stomach.
- Then breathe/sigh out slowly through your mouth and let the air glide out slowly. Feel your whole body relax as you breathe out. Enjoy that feeling of relaxation.
- Perform 3 or 4 deep breaths in this way, then breathe normally for a minute or so before trying again.
- Practice daily and you will find that you can use diaphragmatic breathing techniques to gain control in a stressful situation.

Square Breathing

A nice quick technique to use wherever you are. It can help you to focus if you practice square breathing while looking at a shape with four sides – like a window or door frame.



The more you practice relaxation, the easier it becomes.

You will be able to recognise tension building in your body and respond with relaxation and letting the tension go. This is a great pain management skill.

Breathing Script

To begin with, make sure that you are lying or sitting in a comfortable position. Hands and legs uncrossed. When you are ready, allow your eyes to close if you want to so that you can focus on what you are doing.

Now just as a test, put your hand on the part of your body that's moving the most while you are breathing. There's no need to change anything, just being aware which part of your chest or abdomen is moving most while you breathe'

I just want you to be aware of your breathing now....
notice that each time you breathe in, you breathe in cooler air ...
and each time you breathe out you breathe out slightly warmer air...
just being aware of that sensation. Noticing the cooler air passing over your nostrils and the back of your throat each time you breathe in.....
and then noticing the warmer air each time you breathe out.

If your mind wanders off, just gently bring it back to focusing on your breathing again.
Allowing any thoughts ...to gather like clouds in the skyand drift on by.
And, noticing now the lowest point that the air reaches when you breathe in.
This will be at the bottom of your rib cage ... the upper part of your abdomen.
So ...as you breathe in, I want you to imagine that you have a balloon inside your abdomen....
And with each in-breath, the balloon fills with air and your abdomen rises
and with each out-breath, the balloon collapses and your abdomen falls.
With each in-breath, that balloon fills with air and your abdomen rises, and with each out breath, the balloon collapses and your abdomen falls

Now, placing your right hand on your upper chest and your left hand on your stomach, just below your rib cage...
We are going to imagine that we are in a fishing village and walking down towards the harbour. And standing by the harbour wall...see this as clearly as you can in your mind's eye. This can be a harbour in a place that you know well, or a place you are making up in your imagination. As you stand by the harbour wall now, noticing that the tide is inand the fishing boats are tied up, secure and still in the protection of the harbour.
Imagine that your right hand, the hand on your chest, is one of those boats in the harbour, nice and still.And as you look out beyond the harbour wall, you can see the sea gently rising and falling...in time with your breathing. And out on the water, there is a small fishing boat and the men in the boat are pulling in the nets and that small fishing boat is gently rising... and falling... in time with your breathing.... in time with the waves. Notice your left

hand... on your abdomen, gently rising and falling...in time with the boat and ...in time with the waves.

Your right hand ... on your chest, is nice and still.... like the boats tied up in the harbour ... and your left hand, on your abdomen, is rising and falling gently...in time with the fishing boat...in time with the waves.

Now each time you breathe, each time you breathe out, notice the tension leaving your body with each out-breath. Notice that as you breathe in, your body feels slightly lighter, and as you breathe out, you feel slightly heavier.

And as you focus on your breathing, notice that with each in-breath, each time you breathe in, you are feeling lighter, with each in breath... more alert ... and more aware of your surroundings. And now counting your next 5 in-breaths, with each in-breath feeling more alert

Body scan script

When you are ready, let's begin by focusing on your breathing. At the moment, just being aware of the cooler air when you breathe in... and the slightly warmer air as you breathe out.

Breathing in cooler air and breathing out slightly warmer air. If your mind wanders off, just note what distracted you and bring your attention back to your breathing.

And as your breathing settles into a nice slow rhythm...your abdomen gently rising and falling with each breath, allowing any thoughts to drift in and out of your mind, just letting your thoughts gather...and drift on by... like clouds in the sky... And now..for the next 5 out-breaths, each time you breathe out...think to yourself...I'm feeling more relaxed...with each out-breath...I'm feeling more relaxed.....and allow your body to respond to that. With each out-breath, allowing your body to sink down into the chair, or down into the floor.....

And now scanning your body for any signs of tension...starting with your head. Allowing your forehead and the space between your eyebrows to become smooth and still.....letting your eyes rest behind softly closed eyelids. If you want to, you can raise your eyebrows as you breathe in...and let them go as you breathe out. Feel your brow becoming soft and calm. And thinking about your jaw, your mouth.....allowing your lips and your teeth to part slightly, being aware of the space in your mouth. And now scanning your neck and your shoulders, letting your shoulders drop like a rag doll, allowing any tension from your neck and shoulders to trickle down your arms and out of the ends of your fingertips.....

And scanning your waist.....lower back....and hips, allowing all the tension to trickle down and out of your feet....just allowing any tension to trickle down and out of the end of your toes. And for the next 5 out-breaths, each time you breathe out, think to yourself.....I'm feeling more relaxed...with each out breath...I'm feeling more relaxed. And now focusing on the centre of your body..... above your stomach and just below your rib cage. Notice the warmth right in the centre of your body. And now each time you breathe out, with each out

breath allow that warmth to spread slowly outwards.....with each out breath allow the warmth to spread out to your arms and your hands.....fell the warmth spreading down to your legs and to your feet.....feel the warmth spread up to your shoulders...your neck and your face.

And now imagine you are in a warm place.....somewhere you feel safe and peaceful, a place where you would love to be right now.....perhaps on a beautiful beach.....or inside by a crackling log fire.....visualise this place and build the scene around you as if you were there right now. Notice the colours.....the texture.... the sounds you can hear. Allow the feelings of warmth and peace wash over you. Feeling the warmth on your hands, and your feet, and your face....and spend a few minutes relaxing in this beautiful safe, peaceful place.

And now when you are ready ... start to focus on your breathing again. And notice that with each in-breathe, each time you breath in....you are feeling blighter, more alert, with each in breath, more aware of your surrounds and more aware of being back in the room....and counting your next 5 in breaths, more alert with each in breath...and on your 5th in breath, open your eyes feeling refreshed and alert.

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.

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 my might 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 footand 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.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Before we begin, take time to get yourself comfortable. To do the progressive muscle relaxation, you can either sit in a chair, or if you prefer, lie on your back on a rug or a mat. Wherever you choose to do this, make sure that you're completely comfortable, and able to let the chair, mat or rug support you completely. It may be worth placing something behind your head, either a pillow or a cushion to keep your spine and neck straight.

It is important that you arrange to do this practice in a warm and protected place, in which you feel comfortable and secure. It's best to do it at a time when you won't be interrupted by family, pets or phone calls. Dress in loose comfortable clothes being particularly conscious to wear clothes that are loose at the waist. It is helpful to see this as a time for you, a time for nurturing yourself for self-care, as an opportunity to be by yourself and fully with yourself. If you feel comfortable to do so, close your eyes or else focus on a spot in the room.

Take a few moments to get in touch with the movement of your breath and the sensations in the body. Become aware of your breathing, and notice how your abdomen rises and falls with each breath...

Now take a long slow deep breath in through your nose, all the way down into your stomach. Hold the breath for just a moment, and then exhale through your mouth. Allow your breath to carry away all stress and tension as the air floods out of your lungs.

Take another slow breath in through your nose. Fill your lungs completely. Hold it for a moment... and release the breath through your mouth. Empty your lungs completely with your out-breath.

Take a third deep breath in. Hold it for a moment, and then let it go.

Feel that your body has already undergone a change. The tension in your body has begun to loosen and subside.

Now let your breathing rhythm return to normal...and relax....

During this relaxation I will ask you to tense various muscles throughout your body. Please do this without straining. You do not need to exert yourself, just contract each muscle firmly but gently as you breathe in. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you can simply relax and breathe normally.

Bring your awareness to your feet and toes. Breathe in deeply through your nose, and as you do, gradually curl your toes down and tense the muscles in the soles of your feet. Hold your

breath for just a few seconds and then release the muscles in your feet as you breathe out. Feel the tension in your feet wash away as you exhale. Notice how different your feet feel when tensed and when they are relaxed.

Take another deep breath in again, tense the muscles in the soles of your feet and hold this position for a few seconds. Now release. Feel yourself relaxing more and more deeply with each breath. Your whole body is becoming heavier, softer and more relaxed as each moment passes.

Now bring your awareness to your lower legs...to your calf muscles. As you draw in a nice deep breath, point your toes up towards your knees and tighten these muscles. Hold for just a moment, and then let those muscles go limp as you exhale. Once again, draw in a deep breath...and tighten your calf muscles. Hold for a few seconds, and then let it all go. Feel your muscles relax, and feel the tension washing away with your out-breath.

In a moment you will tense the muscles in the front of your thighs. If you are lying down, you can do this by trying to straighten your legs. You'll feel the muscles pulling your kneecap upwards. If you are seated, you can tense these muscles by pushing your heels down onto the floor.

Take a deep breath in and tense the muscles in your thighs. Hold for just a moment, and then release everything. As you do this, the blood flow to your muscles increases, and you may notice a warm tingling sensation. Enjoy this feeling of soothing relaxation in your thighs. Again, breathe in deeply and tighten your thigh muscles. Hold for a moment. Now release. Focus on letting your muscles go limp and loose.

Always remembering if you feel uncomfortable at any time, you can simply relax and breathe normally.

Draw in a nice deep breath and gradually tighten the muscles in your buttocks. Hold this contraction for a few seconds, and then release your breath. Feel the tension leaving your muscles. Feel them relaxing completely.

Once more, breathe in deeply and tighten the muscles in your buttocks. Hold for a moment. Now release them. You are becoming more and more deeply relaxed. Take another breath, and this time, gradually tighten all the muscles in your legs, from your feet to your buttocks. Do this in whatever way feels natural and comfortable to you. Hold it...and now release all these large strong muscles. Enjoy the sensation of release as you become even more deeply relaxed.

Now bring your awareness to your stomach. Draw in a nice deep breath and then tighten these muscles. Imagine you are trying to touch your belly button to your spine. Now release your breath and let your muscles relax. Notice the sensation of relief that comes from letting go.

Once again, draw in a deep breath and then tighten your stomach muscles. Hold for a few seconds... and then let them relax as you exhale and release all tension.

Remember if you feel uncomfortable at any time, you can simply relax and breathe normally.

Bring your awareness to the muscles in your back. As you slowly breathe in, arch your back slightly and tighten these muscles Now release your breath and let your muscles relax. Again, draw in a deep breath and then tighten your back muscles. Hold for a few seconds...and then let them relax and release.

Now give your attention to your shoulder muscles and the muscles in your neck. As you slowly draw in a nice deep breath, pull your shoulders up towards your ears and squeeze these muscles firmly. Now breathe out completely and allow your contracted muscles to go loose and limp. Again, pull your shoulders up towards your ears and squeeze these muscles firmly. Now feel the tension subside as you relax and breathe out.

Feel the heaviness in your body now. Enjoy the feeling. Feel yourself becoming heavier and heavier. Feel yourself becoming more and more deeply relaxed. You are calm, secure, at peace.

Now it's time to let go of all the tension in your arms and hands. Let's start with your upper arms. As you breathe in, raise your wrists towards your shoulders and tighten the muscles in your upper arms. Hold that breath and that contraction for just a moment...and then gently lower your arms and breathe all the way out. You may feel a warm, burning sensation in your muscles when you tighten them. Feel how relaxing it is to release that tightness and to breathe away all tension. As you curl your upper arms again, tighten the muscles as you breathe in. Breathe in deeply. Now relax your arms and breathe out.

Remember if you feel uncomfortable at any time, you can simply relax and breathe normally.

Now bring your awareness to your forearms. As you breathe in, curl your hands inwards as though you are trying to touch the inside of your elbows with your fingertips. Now feel the tension subside as you relax and breathe out.

Again, take a deep breath in, and tighten the muscles in your forearms. Hold it for a moment, and then release them. Feel the tension washing away. Now, take another breath in and

tightly clench your fists. When you have finished breathing in, hold for just a few seconds, and then release. Notice any feelings of buzzing or throbbing. Your hands are becoming very soft and relaxed. Take another deep breath in and clench your fists again. Hold for just a few seconds, and then release. Let your fingers go limp.

Your arms and hands are feeling heavy and relaxed.

Take a couple of nice long slow breaths now, and just relax. Feel yourself slipping even deeper into a state of complete rest.

Now tighten the muscles in your face by squeezing your eyes shut and clenching your lips together. As you do, breathe in fully. Hold it...now breathe out and relax all your facial muscles. Feel your face softening.

Once more, breathe in deeply while you scrunch the muscles in your eyes and lips....and release.

Now bring your awareness to the muscles in your jaw. Take a deep breath in, and then open your mouth as wide as you can. Feel your jaw muscles stretching and tightening. Now exhale and allow your mouth to gently close.

Again, fill your lungs with air and then open your mouth wide. Now let your mouth relax and let your breath flood all the way out.

You are now completely relaxed from the tips of your toes to the top of your head.

Please take a few more minutes to rest. Relax. Listen to the sound of your breathing and enjoy the lovely, warm sensation of physical relaxation. As we come to the end of the practice, slowly begin to expand your awareness of your body. Seeing yourself as complete right now. Become aware of your position and the physical sensations. Slowly begin to wiggle your toes and fingers. Drawing your attention out and expanding it to the room, to your position, slowly allowing the light to bring you back to the room. Become aware of the sounds around you and slowly open your eyes. If needed, take a gentle stretch and move around.

Grounding Meditation

Find a comfortable position in your chair with your back in an upright position. If possible try to sit up straight, providing your back with full support on the chair or by perhaps using a pillow. Keep your legs uncrossed with your feet flat on the ground while resting your hands on your legs with the palms either facing up or down. You can close your eyes if you wish.

While becoming used to this posture, gently monitor your breathing. Do not make any attempts to control it but instead simply observe how the breath effortlessly comes in and goes back out again.



Notice how each in breath is naturally followed by an out breath. If any thoughts come to your awareness, congratulate yourself for noticing and simply return to your breath.

Now gently direct your attention to your feet. Notice how the soles are touching the ground and make a connection with this feeling. As you breathe in deeply direct your breath all the way down to your feet and then let it go. Take one more deep breath all the way down to the soles of your feet allowing the breath to enfold them fully and exhale.

Visualise at the soles of your feet two wonderful red circles forming, one on each foot, connecting your feet with the floor. Observe how the bright ruby red light glows from within these circles and notice what sensations are there. It could be tingling or sensations of coolness or pressure.

Now take one deep breath and imagine your exhalation forming roots from these red circles, pushing further down into the earth beneath you with each out breath that you take. Notice how as you keep on breathing these roots carry on growing, healthy and strong, penetrating the layers of the earth. They pierce through the ground and the waters and the crystals of the earth, travelling further down as they grow even thicker and stronger, untangled and powerful.

As they keep on travelling down you notice that they stopped just outside the beautiful red core of the earth.

By taking one more deep breath, push your roots all the way into the core. As they penetrate the core completely, you notice that they are bound there, firmly tying you to the earth. The red light of the core now travels up your roots, through all the layers, making your roots glow too, all the way up to your soles. Notice how sensations might begin to change at your feet. The warmth of this nurturing red light completely enfolds your roots and your feet; letting you know that this is your point of connection to the earth. Stay with this feeling for a while

and enjoy being connected with everything, knowing that you are safe. There is nothing that can break this connection. There is nothing that can move you. There is an entire planet right under your feet.

With your breath, expand your awareness and scan your body for any tension or toxin and visualise them as clouds of smoke surrounding the area that feels tense. With a deep breath exhale this cloud of energy through your roots and watch as it travels down all the way and enters the core, leaving your body relaxed and purified.

Now return to your breath, noticing its rhythm while being aware of this powerful connection. Know that your roots are always there keeping you connected, safe and unmoved. All you need to do each time is to simply remind yourself of this connection.

As you breathe in and out, bring your attention back to your entire body, centre yourself with your breath and bring your awareness to your heart and its beating rhythm. Move your fingers and perhaps wiggle your toes. Gradually bringing yourself back, becoming more aware of the sounds around you, the floor beneath your feet and the room you are in. take a few more breaths and whenever you're ready, open your eyes.

Chevreur's pendulum

This is a bit of fun. We are going to have a go at making a pendulum swing without trying to do anything.

Now...hold the end of the string in your fingertips. Now hold it directly over the centre of the diagram in front of you, right over the centre point.

Now as you concentrate and follow these simple instructions, the pendulum will begin to swing back and forth. Just allow your eyes to go back and forth across the diagram, left to right, left to right and back and forth.

Move your eyes back and forth across the paper from right to left and back and forth." - allow the group to have a go, ensure they are not gripping the string too tightly or swinging the pendulum consciously.

Don't watch anyone else and don't talk, just immerse yourself in the experience and see what happens.

Good! Now think up and down, up and down and up and down. Notice how the pendulum begins to move up and down, up and down.

How did you do that?

Were you moving your hand?

Were you moving your fingers?

Your body responds to what is going on in your mind.

Explain what happens to body if you have anxiety or worrying thoughts.

It's not magic, it's natural and relaxation can help you to restore a state of balance. It can also help you to alter your body, for example:

Lower your blood pressure

Reduce your pulse

Reduce pain sensations

Relaxation for pain reduction script

To begin with, let's just start with focusing on your breathing, being aware of breathing in cooler air, and breathing out slightly warmer air..... cooler air passing over your nostrils and the back of your throat ...and then breathing out slightly warmer air... and with each out breath, each time you breathe out, saying to yourself I'm feeling more relaxed...with each out-breath, I'm feeling more relaxed.

And now scanning your body and being aware of all the sensations. If you notice discomfort or intense sensations in a certain part of your body, directing your breath into that area and allowing those sensations to happen. Noticing how those sensations can become more intense ... and less intense

And continuing to focus on the area of greatest intensity, noticing the quality of the sensation what shape is it? What colour is it? Is it hot or cold?.....see if you can get an image of what this looks like right now. Still relaxed, still calm, nice calm breathing, feeling in control

And now deciding how you would like to change that shape to make it more comfortable changing the shape ... maybe shrinking it or softening it.....just a small change to start with ...

Changing the colour ... perhaps from a dark to a light colour, maybe imagining a lighter colour seeping in, or even imagining painting it... a nicer colour, a calmer, more comfortable colour.....

And if you want to – imagine changing the temperature, cooling or warming it, pouring water over it? Using a fan? See if you can do this, as much or as little as you feel comfortable with....

Breathing into the area and again looking at the shape, the colour, the temperature, the texture and altering that image to something more comfortable.

You are all doing really well,

And now for a little while, going back to focusing on your breathing again, nice, calm breathing.....

And, if you want to, let your mind wander off to your safe place, a place where you feel happy, peaceful and calm build the scene as if you were there right now, the place where you would love to be, and spend a few minutes enjoying relaxing in this calm place ...

And now just focusing on your breathing again and being aware that with each in breath ...you are feeling lighter and more alert, more aware of your surroundings and more aware of being back in the room.... and counting your next five in breaths, feeling more alert each time you breathe in ... and on your fifth in-breath, open your eyes. Stretch and move if you need to.

Guided Imagery: Safe Place

Allow yourself to be in a comfortable position, either lying down or sitting up. If you're sitting up, place a pillow behind your back, and allow your neck and your back to be nicely supported, not leaning back too much if you have difficulty staying awake.

Remember that if you feel afraid at any time, just open your eyes and ground yourself in today. You are safe and you are in control today.

How does it feel? Let your body begin to relax by releasing the areas of tension by breathing. Take slow deep breaths and as you exhale let the tension go. Where is your body feeling tense? Focus your attention on this area as you take another breath in. Feel this area relaxing as you breathe out. Allow your breathing to gradually slow down.

Breathe in and out

As you do this, allow yourself to picture in your mind's eye, a safe place. What is the first place that comes to mind? What type of place does your mind choose as a safe place? In this place of safety, no one can come without your invitation. In this place of safety, you are always at peace.

Maybe you are in a beautiful garden, or in the mountains, or in an open field or the beach. Picture a place that feels calm, safe, and serene. A place you feel safe and protected. Each time you come to your safe place, you may develop it and allow it to become more and more beautiful. Allow yourself to see what is here today

Imagine the details of your surroundings. Notice the foliage and beautiful colours and hues. What season is it? Notice the ground. Is it earthy soil, rock, or sand? Are you barefooted? What does it feel like beneath your feet?

What smells do you notice? Is it sweet, pungent, or refreshing? Are there birds overhead? Listen to their singing. What other sounds do you hear? Let these sounds lull you peacefully.

Notice if there is any water. Is there a pond or a waterfall or waves? Can you hear the sound of the water? Let the water flow over your skin. Notice how it feels on your skin. Can you taste it?

Notice if there is a breeze or wind. What does it feel like on your face? Is it warm or cool? Allow yourself to take in all the senses feeling calm, serene, and peaceful.

Breathe in and out

Now allow yourself to lie down in the safe place and feel the ground beneath your body. Notice the gentle earth below warming you. Imagine the earth cradling you allowing you to relax even more and feel safe during this meditation.

Feel your body resting on the ground allowing any tension to be released into the ground letting it seep away. Can you hear the water lapping in the pond, tricking by, or splashing as it makes waves? Imagine the water washing over you and taking away any tension left in your body.

Breathe in and out

Now look above you and notice the colour of the sky. Notice the sun. Feel the warm rays of the sun on your skin. What else do you see? Are there clouds? Are there any trees around? What kind of leaves do they have? Notice their beautiful colours.

Breathe in and out

Now look around, notice a bench, or rock or tree stump in this place, and go sit on it. Feel the sun warming you and further relaxing you. Breathe in the warmth and vibrancy of the sun allowing it to fill you with a sense of calm and peace from the top of your head to the tips of your toes. Notice as you become part of your safe place that you feel more rested, more relaxed, more at peace.

Breathe in and out

Allow yourself to create a place of safety and peace that is always yours, always safe.... And breathe in the safety. And breathe out the fear. And breathe in the safety. And breathe out the fear.... As you breathe in, you can even smell the smells of safety. Perhaps you would like to build a shelter of some kind, a cottage, a cave, a tent, a tree house. And if it's already there, you may add to it.... Plant flowers, adding a splash of colour. Add special places or rooms to your safe place.... Create anything that you would like.

After you have thoroughly visualized this place and you are ready to leave, allow yourself to come back into the room and leave your safe place for now, knowing that you can return to your safe place any time you like.

Open your eyes but stay in a relaxed position taking a moment to reawaken completely. Continue to breathe smoothly and rhythmically. Take a few moments to experience and enjoy your relaxing guided meditation. Your safe place is available to you whenever you need to go there.

Body scan

Think about your eyes and eyebrows, your forehead and the space between your eyes.

Allow this area to become smooth. Raise your eyebrows as you breathe in slowly and then let them come to rest as you slowly breathe out.

Eyes resting gently behind closed eyelids

Let your lips and teeth part, let your tongue fall away from the roof of your mouth, be aware of the space in your mouth

Let your shoulders drop down... bring your shoulder blades together behind your back and then let go

Let your hands rest in your lap with your palms facing upwards, fingers gently curled

(if you are on a chair without arms, allow your arms to hang down loosely if you want to)

Allow the chair to hold and fully support your weight

Let your feet rest flat on the floor.... Focus on where the soles of your feet touch the floor (you might feel that your feet are light or tingling when you do this)

Allow your breathing to be slow and calm. Blow out slowly for a count of 5.... Repeat

One Minute Relaxation (focused breathing)

Inhale slowly to the count of four (count slowly; to the pace of one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand....). Pause to the count of three.

Exhale slowly to the count of five.

The breathing process goes like this:

Inhale... two, three, four...pause...two, three.... exhale...two, three, four five....

Inhale... two, three, four...pause...two, three.... exhale...two, three, four five....

Repeat for a minute.

If your mind wanders off, gently bring it back to your breathing again.

Quick relaxation techniques

Quick stretch relax

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart.

As you slowly breathe in stretch your arms out and up, spread your fingers, open your mouth and raise your eyebrows.

Now, as you gently and slowly breathe out, let everything go, hang forwards so that your arms are dangling. Allow all the tension to flow out of the ends of your fingertips.

Breathing awareness

Either lying or sitting, become aware of your breathing and focus on it for a minute. Let one hand rest on your upper chest and one hand rest on your belly (just below your rib cage).

Imagine a balloon in your stomach. Each time you breathe in, the balloon fills with air, as you breathe out - the balloon deflates. Feel your belly rising and falling slowly with each breath. Your upper chest should be still and calm.

Each time you notice your mind wandering, just gently bring your attention back to your breathing.

(Practice this calm breathing as often as you remember throughout the day. Also practice calm slow breathing when changing position or exercising. Breathe with pain - don't hold your breath and tense up. Movement will feel easier.)

Quick panic-fixer - This technique may help reduce feelings of panic in less than one minute. Take a normal breath in and then - breathe out slowly while you count 5 seconds (think - one...and.... two...and ...three....and.... four ...and ...five). As your breathing slows down, gently count 6 seconds as you slowly breathe out, then 7 seconds. **Or hum a tune / sing. Or suck a sweet - it's hard to over-breathe with your mouth shut.**

(There's no need to take "deep breaths", breathing in will take of itself!!)

Quick imagery

If you close your eyes and think of the word "calm" - what do you see?
See your calm scene in your mind's eye.

As you slow down your breathing, with each out breath, think the word “calm” and imagine your calm place.

Distancing - another quick imagery method of helping you to feel calm when you are feeling anxious or if your mind is over-active.

If you like imagery, you may find these useful.

Gently close your eyes, focus on your slow breathing and then imagine the following:

A leaf falling from a tree and then floating slowly downstream

Clouds moving across the sky

Helium filled balloons slowly rising - watch until they disappear from view

What is Mindfulness?

.... a Quality of Awareness.... A way of Being With Heartfulness....

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally”

Jon Kabat-Zinn

“Mindfulness is the willingness and capacity to be equally present with all events and experience with discernment, curiosity and kindness”

Christina Feldman

“The essence of mindfulness is to be fully aware of our experience in each moment, equally open to whatever it has to offer and free of the domination of habitual, automatic, cognitive routines that are often goal-oriented and, in one form or another, related to wanting things to be other than they are.”

John Teasdale.

What Mindfulness Is Not

- *Mindfulness is not trying to relax.* When we become aware of what’s happening in our lives it can be anything but relaxing, especially if we’re stuck in a difficult situation. As we learn more about ourselves, however, we become less surprised by the feelings that

arise within us. We develop a less reactive relationship to inner experience. We can recognise and let go of emotional storms more easily.

- *Mindfulness is not a religion.* Although mindfulness has been practiced by Buddhist nuns and monks for over 2,500 years, any purposeful activity that increases awareness of moment-to-moment experience is a mindfulness exercise. We can practice mindfulness as part of a religion or not. Modern scientific psychology considers mindfulness to be a core healing factor in psychotherapy.
- *Mindfulness is not about transcending ordinary life.* Mindfulness is making intimate contact with each moment of our lives, no matter how trivial or mundane. Simple things can become very special – extraordinarily ordinary – with this type of awareness. For example the flavour of your food or the colour of a rose will be enhanced if you pay close attention to it. Mindfulness is also about experiencing oneself more fully, not trying to bypass the mundane, ragged edges of our lives.
- *Mindfulness is not emptying the mind of thoughts.* The brain will always produce thoughts – that’s what it does. Mindfulness allows us to develop a more harmonious relationship with our thoughts and feelings through a deep understanding of how the mind works. It may feel as if we have fewer thoughts because we are not struggling with them so much.
- *Mindfulness is not difficult.* You shouldn’t feel disheartened when you discover that your mind wanders incessantly. That’s the nature of the mind. It’s also the nature of the mind to eventually become aware of its wandering. Ironically, it’s in the very moment when you despair that you’re not mindful that you’ve become mindful. It’s not possible to do this practice perfectly, nor is it possible to fail. That is why it’s called a ‘practice’.
- *Mindfulness is not escape from pain.* This is the toughest idea to accept because we rarely do anything without the wish to feel better. You will feel better with mindfulness and acceptance, but only by learning not to escape from pain. Pain is like an angry bull: When it’s confined to a tight stall, it will be wild and try to escape. When it’s in a wide open field, it will calm down. Mindfulness makes emotional space for pain.

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EVEN IF YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK,

YOU WILL GET RUN OVER IF YOU JUST SIT
THERE