

# Relaxation Strategies

## ★ Controlled breathing ★

Breathing plays an essential role in anxiety. Practising techniques to control your breathing will reduce your general anxiety. It is helpful to practice doing this at a quiet time when you will not be disturbed. It can be done sitting up or lying down. With enough practice, it can also help to reduce your anxiety when you are in stressful situations. It can be helpful to imagine letting go of your anxieties with each breath. Imagine the worries dissolving or floating away.

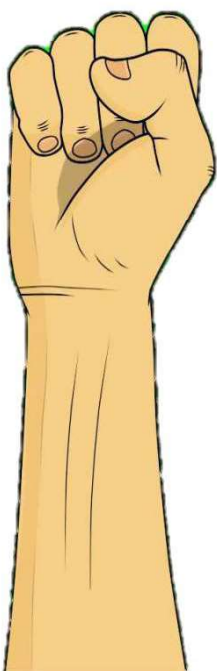


1. Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach
2. Take a deep breath in slowly through your nose for 7 seconds; both your hands should rise gently as you breathe
3. Hold the breath for 2 seconds
4. Release your breath slowly for 11 seconds
5. Practice!

## ★ Muscle relaxation ★

It may be helpful to find a warm comfortable place where you will not be disturbed to practise these techniques. This exercise will teach you to relax different muscles in your body by tensing them for 5 seconds and then relaxing. Whilst tensing each muscle, study the tension and notice how different it feels when they become relaxed.






- **Hands** – clench your left fist, and then relax. Do the same with your right.
- **Arms** – bend your elbows and tense your arm and bicep, then relax.
- **Neck** – Press your head back and roll it from side to side slowly. Feel the tension moving then bring your head forward into a comfortable position.
- **Face** – focus on your jaw and forehead. Lower your eyebrows into a frown and then raise them. After 5 seconds relax them and clench your jaw for 5 seconds. Notice the difference between tensing and relaxing.
- **Chest** – take a deep breath and notice your chest rising. Hold it for a few seconds then relax.
- **Stomach** – tense your stomach muscles as tight as you can and then relax.
- **Legs** – straighten your legs and stretch out as far as possible. Bend your feet up towards your face. After 5 seconds on stretching, wiggle your toes and relax.



# Distraction Techniques

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Five things you can see  
Four things you can touch  
Three things you can hear  
Two things you can smell  
One thing you can taste

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ABCD

Think of film titles/ names/ books/ countries beginning with A, B, C etc. till you get to Z



Colours

Find five things in the room that are yellow/ blue/ green etc.

