



# RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

*Provided through the Marketing and Development Committee  
of the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas*

Relaxation techniques are useful in dealing with stress and can help relieve problems related to physical health and emotional well-being including:

- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- Intestinal problems
- Difficulty sleeping
- Clenching or grinding teeth
- Tension
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Depression



Deep breathing is a simple, easy-to-do relaxation technique that takes just a few minutes and can be done at home, work or play.

- Sit or lie down.
- Breathe in slowly through your nose and fill up your lower lungs with air as you slowly count to 10. You should be able to see and feel your chest and abdomen expand.
- When your lungs are full, exhale slowly and push all the air from your lungs.
- Repeat at least three times, or until you feel calmer.

When you breathe deeply by contracting and expanding the diaphragm, blood is able to carry oxygen more efficiently throughout the body. One result is that more oxygen to the brain helps you to think more clearly.



***Relaxation techniques are simple,  
inexpensive, and can help relieve stress  
and improve health.***

***Feeling relaxed can result in  
having more energy to take  
on the challenges of daily life!***

# RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation** is a technique that takes fifteen to twenty minutes; this involves tightening and releasing various muscles in the body, with the result of feeling relaxed from head to toe.

- Sit or lie down, and close your eyes.
- Begin with your feet and slowly tighten the muscles for a few seconds, then relax them. Repeat 3 to 5 times.
- Do the same with each of these muscle groups:
  - ♦ thighs and buttocks - abdomen and chest.
  - ♦ fingers and arms - shoulders and neck - face and head.
- Breathe deeply and slowly; finish by allowing your whole body to relax.



**Visualization** involves creating a relaxing mental image for a few minutes, or longer if wanted. This can be done just about anywhere when you have a little extra time. Thinking about something that is relaxing can help a person feel relaxed and refreshed.

- Close your eyes; think about a positive scene or event such as
  - ♦ laying on a beach in the sun, listening to the ocean waves.
  - ♦ imagining yourself in a pleasant place or at an enjoyable event.
- Think about details such as smells, sounds and pleasant sensations.

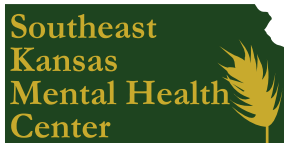
**Meditation** is the process of relaxing your mind and body, while breathing evenly and focusing on a single word, phrase or image. This technique requires time and patience. Participating in a meditation group or using a guided meditation audiotope can be helpful.

**Yoga** includes meditation and gentle body movements. A class on yoga is a good way to learn more about this relaxation technique.

**Massage** can be relaxing, whether you give yourself a neck rub or use a trained massage therapist.

**When you are relaxed, your breathing and heart rate slow down.  
When your body is relaxed, your mind will feel calmer.**

## MORE INFORMATION



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