

# 5-Minute Relaxation Techniques

*Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are ~ Chinese Proverb*

Relaxation techniques have been around for hundreds of years throughout various cultures and come in many different forms, such as Yoga, Tai Chi, exercise, meditation, hypnosis and massage, among others. In general, studies show that practicing relaxation techniques regularly can improve how you physically respond to stress and may even have a positive impact on your overall health.

There are general categories of relaxation techniques, including:

- **Autogenic Relaxation:** involves imagery and body awareness such as thinking about a calming memory or place and then focusing on different physical sensations such as your heartbeat or breathing. You may repeat a certain word or phrase in order to help you focus on relaxing and reducing muscle tension.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** focuses on tensing and relaxing various muscle groups while paying attention to the physical sensations it produces.
- **Visualization:** involves forming mental images to create a calming or relaxing place. An example may include imagining yourself near a river and focusing on your surroundings—the sound of the water rushing, the feel of the sun, etc.

It doesn't necessarily matter which technique you practice; what matters is that you practice it regularly. Below are some specific techniques that can be practiced once or twice a day:

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position. Put your hands on your abdomen and as you breathe in, let it expand like a balloon filling with air. As you exhale, slowly let the air out. You should feel your abdomen rising and falling as you breathe.
- Try to raise your shoulders up to your ears for 5 seconds, and then let your shoulders drop. One at a time, rotate each shoulder backward 5 to 10 times, and then rotate them together 5 to 10 times.
- In a relaxed position, close your eyes and breathe naturally. Think of the number 'one' as you inhale. Continue this for at least five minutes but try for 10 to 20 minutes. Anytime your mind starts to wander, gently pull it back to thinking 'one.'

Source:

[www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/relaxation-techniques-000359.htm](http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/relaxation-techniques-000359.htm)

[www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress/SR00026](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress/SR00026)

[www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d001201-d001300/d001246/d001246.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d001201-d001300/d001246/d001246.html)

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