

Stress Management & Relaxation Techniques

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation focuses on the major muscle groups and learning to recognise the difference between tension and relaxation in the muscles.

Commencing at your feet and working upwards

Bring your attention to your

- Thighs, buttocks, calves and feet
Tense the individual muscles for 5-7 seconds and then relax for 10-15 seconds
Repeat for the following groups
- Hands, forearms and biceps
- Chest, stomach and lower back
- Head, face, throat and shoulders

Slow breathing or Controlled Breathing Exercise

Focus on your breathing pattern. Notice if you breathe mainly through the chest or through the stomach.

The goal is to breath deeply and slowly though the nose, feeling more movement in the stomach than the chest as you inhale and exhale.

Place your hand on your diaphragm, just below your ribs. Release any tension by blowing out the air in your lungs with a big sigh. You should notice your shoulders relax and lower.

Take a deep breath in for three to five seconds notice your hand should move.

Hold the breath for one second and then release for three seconds feeling your hand sink back in.

The time for breathing in and out can vary so breathe at the rate your feel comfortable. Stop if you feel dizzy or light headed.

Isometric Exercise

- Take a small breath and hold it for up to 7 seconds.
- At the same time slowly tense your leg muscles by crossing your feet at the ankles, pressing down with the upper leg while trying to lift the lower leg.
- After 7 seconds breathe out and slowly say the word “relax” to yourself.
- Let all the tension go from your muscles.