

RELAXATION

Relaxation techniques are a good way to reduce the physical signs of stress. There are many ways to relax your mind and body. Find a relaxation technique that suits you and use it when you feel tense. It is a good idea to have a variety of relaxation exercises to choose from, as some relaxation techniques will not be appropriate in certain situations.

Breathing awareness and deep breathing

Paying attention to your breathing.

Place one hand on your upper chest and the other on your abdomen (tummy) and notice if the hand on your upper chest or the hand on your abdomen moves the most when you breathe.

When a person is anxious, they tend to breathe many short, shallow breaths in their upper chest.

When you notice yourself doing this, you can relax by changing your breathing style.

Slow down your breathing by counting to four on the in breath and four on the out breath.

Breathe through your nose and down into your abdomen.

Spend several minutes practicing the breathing.

(To see if this is having any effect, take your pulse (heart rate) before and after the exercise).

TRY THESE EXERCISES WITH YOUR KIDS!

Teaching your children to use breath to relax

Take a candle – birthday candle or tea light is fine.

Light it.

Take a deep breathe and allow the breath to escape in such a way that the candle flickers BUT does not go out.

Notice the flicker.

Concentrate on the flicker.

If you blow too hard and the flame goes out relight it.

Notice how you relax with the slow escape of your breath.

Notice how mindful you are of the flame as you try hard to make it flicker.

Notice how lovely the candle flame is.