

RELAXATION

Listed below are three techniques for coping with the General Tension you may feel while getting used to learning how to relax. (They have been used as a tool to aid people in stopping smoking)

DEEP BREATHING:

1. With your mouth closed and your shoulders relaxed, inhale as slowly and as deeply as you can while silently counting to eight. As you do that, push your stomach out.
2. Hold your breath while counting silently to four.
3. Exhale slowly while counting silently to eight.
4. Do this slow, deep breathing cycle of exercises five times. (As the days and weeks pass, try to increase the length of your silences as much as you can.)

MUSCLE GROUP EXERCISES:

These exercises are designed to relax the major muscle groups as your body. The tensing-then-relaxing method used in each exercise enables you, with practice to relax your muscles quickly. And when they're relaxed, you tend to be relaxed. The exercises should be done once a day at a convenient time in a place where you can be alone. Wear appropriate clothes and, if you wear glasses or contact lenses, remove them. Each exercise should be done one time or until the muscle group being exercised is relaxed. They shouldn't take more than 20 minutes, and they're done as follows:

For the fingers, hands, and forearms: Clench your fists as tight as you can for 5 seconds. Then relax them for 5 seconds.

For the upper arms: Bend your elbows so that your fingers touch your shoulders. Tense your upper-arm muscles for 5 seconds. Then straighten out your arms and relax for 5 seconds.

For the muscles in the forehead area: Wrinkle your forehead, and raise your eyebrows for 5 seconds. Then relax for 5 seconds.

For the Jaw Muscles: Clench your jaws tightly for 5 seconds. Then relax them for 5 seconds.

For the muscles around the mouth: Press your lips together firmly for 5 seconds. Then relax for 5 seconds.

For the tongue-muscle area: Press your tongue against the roof of your mouth for 5 seconds. Then relax it for 5 seconds.

For the eye muscles: Shut your eyes tightly for 5 seconds. Then open them for 5 seconds.

For the neck (in a sitting or kneeling position): Press your head backward. Then roll it to the right and keep it moving in a slow circle or arc. As you move it, feel the muscles in your throat and neck stretch. After you've made a complete circle, bring your head to an upright position. Relax for 5 seconds.

For the neck and jaws (in a sitting or kneeling position): Bend your head forward and press your chin against your chest. Hold it there for 5 seconds. Then straighten your head and relax. Relax for 5 seconds.

For the chest area: Take a deep breath, and hold it for 5 seconds. Then relax for 5 seconds.

For the abdomen: Tighten your stomach and abdominal muscles for 5 seconds. Then relax for 5 seconds.

For the shoulders and the upper part of the back: (in a sitting or kneeling position): Bring your shoulders up toward your ears, and rotate your shoulders for 5 seconds. Then relax for 5 seconds.

For the back (in a sitting or kneeling position): Arch your back for 5 seconds. Then relax for 5 seconds.

For the thighs: Press your heels down on the floor as hard as you can, and flex your thighs for 5 seconds. Then relax for 5 seconds.

For the lower-leg muscles: Extend both legs, and point your toes toward your head for 5 seconds. Then relax for 5 seconds.

For the calf muscles: Extend both legs, and point your toes away from your face for 5 seconds. Then relax for 5 seconds.

KEEP IN MIND THAT, although we want you to do the muscle-group exercises as a complete series once a day, you can use a few of them as a way to deal with a particular tension situation. (Before a talk with your boss).

MEDITATION:

In the simplest terms, meditation is a means of achieving a state of consciousness that allows your body to release tension. It feels somewhat like dozing and is characterized by a drop in your rates of breathing and blood pressure.

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position in a chair. Or you can sit cross legged on a bed or the floor if you like, but it's not necessary.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Relax all your muscles as much as you can.
4. Breathe through your nose, and say the word "one" each time you breathe out. Focus your mind on the word "one" while you are saying it. If ideas come to your mind that interfere with your focusing on the word "one", don't try to force them away. Instead, bring your mind slowly and easily back to the word "one". Do this meditation exercise twice a day for 20 minutes in a place where you can be alone. And while you are at it, maintain an open, non aggressive attitude. In other words, don't try to work toward the meditative state of consciousness. LET IT COME TO YOU.