

Your breathing pattern changes when you are tense and anxious. You breathe faster, your muscles use more oxygen, your breathing muscles tighten, and your airways narrow. Chronic lung disorders create tension and anxiety that can increase these symptoms. These physical reactions to stress lead to fatigue and shortness of breath and start the cycle of more anxiety and tension.

Practicing progressive relaxation helps relieve this tension and anxiety that accompanies your breathlessness. By learning to relax your mind and body you will feel better and decrease the amount of oxygen the muscles use.

Most people cannot relax at will. You need to learn how to relax. This skill allows you to gain control over stress and tension. Relaxation takes time and daily practice. Progressive relaxation will help you identify when you are becoming tense and allow you to relax any part of your body. Panic is diminished and control of breathing is regained.



TO PRACTICE:

1. Find a quiet peaceful place. Lie down on a comfortable surface and place a pillow under your head, arms, and knees.
2. Take in a slow relaxed breath. Breathe out using Pursed Lip Breathing. Let your body relax. Use Pursed Lip Breathing for 5-6 breaths. Think to yourself; Calm in, Tension out.
3. Now inhale. Tighten ankles and toes. Hold for a count of 5. Exhale and release slowly. Repeat 3 times.
4. Inhale. Tense calf, knee, and thigh muscles. Hold for a count of 5. Exhale and release slowly.
5. Inhale. Tense your abdominal muscles. Hold for a count of 5. Exhale and release slowly.
6. Clench your fist, tighten finger muscles and arm muscles. Hold for a count of 5. Exhale and relax.
7. Tighten your shoulders. Hold for a count of 5. Relax.
8. Tighten your face muscles. Clench your jaw, close eyelids tight, wrinkle your forehead. Hold for a count of 5. Relax.

Now just breathe. Relax every muscle. Feel a sense of warmth and heaviness. Let yourself float. Think of nothing except your breath flowing in and out. Lie still and enjoy the feeling of relaxation until you are ready to get up.

Take a slow relaxed breath in, - exhale using Pursed Lip Breathing. Open your eyes, wiggle your feet. Move slowly when ready to sit up.

Do not RUSH.

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QUICK RELAXATION

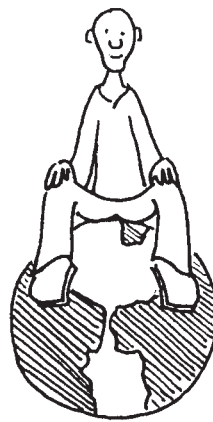
When you feel angry, nervousness, tense, or panicky.

1st - Close your eyes. Take a slow breath in.

2nd - Breathe out slowly, using Pursed Lip Breathing.

3rd - As you breathe out, let your shoulders drop a little and let your jaw drop - just enough so your teeth aren't touching.

4th - Tell yourself 'Stay calm and relax'.



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