

The Body/Mind Relaxation and Sleep Exercise **Janet Green Garrison**

Breathing is a key element in relaxation, and this exercise uses your breathing process to help you get to sleep.

It can also be used to take short, quick tension reducing moments throughout your day: anytime, anywhere.

Practice it each night when you are comfortable in your bed to help you fall asleep. Those “practice sessions” will prepare you to use the breathing technique when you are out in your daily life and need to feel more calm, centered and relaxed. Pausing, and taking 3 to 5 of these breaths will help.

1. Once you are comfortable in bed, begin to pay attention to your breathing rhythm. In your mind, count the length of inhales and exhales.
2. You want to make your **exhalation twice as long as your inhalation**. This may take a few days or weeks to perfect, but be patient and relaxed....remember, you are trying to relax and fall asleep, so don't stress.
3. Try to make your breath smooth and easy, no pauses or jerks. See if it can be like a wave: the inhale flows right into the exhale which flows right into the next inhale, etc.
4. **4. Inside your mind you are paying attention and counting....something like this:**
 - **“Inhaling 1-2-3-4, exhaling 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8.”**
 - **Remember, it might take some practice time to get really comfortable with an exhale that is twice as long as your inhale. So you might start out with a count like: “Inhaling 1-2, exhaling 1-2-3-4.**
 - **Initially, your exhale might only be a few beats longer than your inhale. That's fine, keep practicing.**
 - **What is most important is that it is comfortable for YOU.**

By keeping your mind on nothing but a simple counting process you are keeping your mind from worry and planning. By lengthening your exhalations, you are stimulating the relaxation response in the body.

For more information: [Freedom From Stress](#) by Phil Nuernberger and [The Willpower Instinct: How Self-Control Works, Why It Matters, and What you Can Do to Get More of it](#) by Kelly McGonigal, Ph. D.

The Quieting Response by Alice and Charles Stroebe

Whenever you encounter a stressful situation and wish to relax: Check your breathing. If it is shallow, indicating excessive tension, smile a big smile inside and smile with the eyes: and suggest to yourself, “I can leave my body out of

this". Then, take an easy, deep breath and on the out breath, let the body go totally limp, imagine feelings of heaviness and warmth flowing from your neck down to your toes, reaching your toes at about the same time you have finally let the breath out. Then carry on your normal activities.

(to be used a smany times each day as necessary (perhaps from 30 to 100 times!))

"I Am Relaxed"— A simple form of meditation and relaxation.

1. Sit comfortably and quietly.
2. Tell yourself that you are going to use the next 5 or 10 minutes to re-balance, to heal, to relax yourself.
3. Surrender the weight of your body, allowing the chair, or floor to support you.
4. Close your eyes, gently cutting out visual stimulation and distraction.
5. As you inhale, repeat to yourself..."I AM..."
6. As you exhale say..."RELAXED..."
7. Continue to breath normally. Just watch the breath flow in and out repeating, "I am relaxed".
8. If/when your mind wanders, gently bring it bak to the awareness of your breath and your statement..."I am relaxed."
9. Continue doing this for as long as the time you have set aside to practice.
10. To conclude, discontinue the phrase and slowly stretch your hands and feet, your arms and legs, and then your whole body.
11. Open you eyes a sliver at a time.
12. Continue your day



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