

Guidelines for Daily Relaxation

1. Remember to think pleasant thoughts.

For example, if the idea of “warm” hands doesn’t seem pleasant to you, then think of “relaxed” hands, “heavy” hands, or “relaxed, comfortable” hands. Never use an image that has unpleasant associations for you.

2. Be assertive about your rights to relax.

Assert your rights with family, friends, and, if possible, your boss to have a few moments of your own to relax deeply. Your health deserves no less and others will also benefit from your improved health and attitude.

3. Choose a technique that suits you

Don’t be afraid to change it, shorten it, lengthen it, or do whatever makes it more acceptable and more effective for you.

4. Don’t get discouraged.

To become very proficient in relaxation, that is, to relax deeply and serenely in a wide variety of situations and circumstances takes time, practice and much discipline. You are probably doing even better than you think, simply by having become aware of relaxation and the simple steps involved in doing something about it.

5. Try to avoid comparing and judging yourself.

Get in the habit of simply experiencing whatever degree of relaxation you are capable of at any time.

6. Remember the four basic requirements for relaxation.

If these are present, you will relax: a quiet environment, a comfortable posture, mental concentration, a passive attitude

7. Wait for two hours after a meal before doing relaxation exercises.

The digestive processes are at their peak during the two hours after eating and this seems to interfere with deep relaxation.

8. Try to relax twice daily for ten to fifteen minutes each time.

Getting Help

If you find that these exercises are not helping you with your anxiety and systems, please call Hyland Behavioral Health for an assessment. We offer a wide variety of outpatient programs to help you manage these symptoms.

Please call 314-525-4400 24 hours a day to schedule an assessment.

Call 314-525-7296 for Outpatient services



8 Ways to De-stress, Relax, and Be Well

1. Talk to another person.

Talking to someone will help you get your mind off your anxiety symptoms.

2. Move around or engage in physical activity

Move with it. Walk to the bathroom and back. Some suggestions include walking outside, doing household chores, riding a bike, jogging, swimming, and gardening.

3. Do something that requires focused concentration.

Suggestions include reading a novel, solving puzzles, knitting, sewing, writing a running account of your anxiety symptoms, playing card or board games, painting,

4. Express Anger.

Pound a pillow or bed with both fists, or scream in your car with the windows up.

5. Experience something immediately pleasurable.

Have your spouse or significant other hold you, enjoy a (healthy) snack or meal, or take a shower or bath.

6. Practice thought-stopping.

Take a deep breath, and then shout “stop” or “get out” (may do silently or visualize a large stop sign). Repeat several times, if necessary, or substitute calming and supportive statements to yourself.

7. Practice abdominal breathing.

After 3 or 4 minutes you will feel you have slowed down a run-away reaction. This helps to eliminate hyperventilation symptoms.

8. Practice muscle relaxation

- Clench your fists, hold 10 seconds, and then release for 15-20 seconds. Repeat.
- Tighten your bicep muscles by drawing forearms up toward shoulders to make a muscle with both arms. Hold 10 seconds, relax 15-20 seconds.
- Tighten your forehead muscles by raising your eyebrows, hold for 10 seconds, relax for 15-20 seconds.
- Tighten muscles around eyes by clenching them shut, hold for ten seconds, relax 15-20 seconds.

