

A GUIDE TO RELAXATION THERAPY



By Linda Kleida
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A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Welcome!

This practical guide is designed to show you quick and easy steps on how to use techniques from relaxation therapy in everyday life.

It is not always easy to maintain a stress free lifestyle. With today's hectic lifestyle, we are often focussed on what to do with our time, always alert, keeping up with deadlines and in need of simple and practical solutions to help us relax.

The key word is practical.

When we are in a relaxed state of being, we are at our fullest and best state. Our body is no longer drained, our energy is at its peak, and the mind is running smoothly and clearly.

As we relax, we begin to really take control over our Self.

With time and practice, relaxation can be a normal and healthy part of your life.

Enjoy the journey!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The Stress Epidemic

Stress is epidemic in the western world. Over two-thirds of office visits to physicians are for stress related illness. Stress is a major contributing factor either directly or indirectly, to coronary artery disease, cancer, respiratory disorders, accidental injuries, cirrhosis of the liver and suicide; the six leading causes of death in the United States. Stress aggravates other conditions such as multiple sclerosis, diabetes, herpes, mental illness, alcoholism, drug abuse, and family discord and violence.

The stress epidemic is an extremely costly one. The medical costs alone have been estimated in the United States at well over 1 Billion dollars per year. Stress costs industry approximately 150 billion dollars per year in increased health insurance outlays, burnout, absenteeism, reduced productivity, costly mistakes in the office and on the shop floor, poor morale, high employee turnover, as well as family, alcohol and drug related problems.

Stress: The Silent Killer

Stress is a state of tension that is created when a person responds to the demands and pressures that come from work, family and other external sources, as well as those that are internally generated from self imposed demands, obligations and self-criticism.

Stress is both additive and cumulative. It adds up over time until a state of crisis is reached and symptoms appear. These symptoms may manifest themselves psychologically as irritability, anxiety, impaired concentration, mental confusion, poor judgment, frustration and anger. They may appear as physical symptoms. Common physical symptoms of stress include: muscle tension, headaches, low back pain, insomnia and high blood pressure.

Untreated, these symptoms may lead to physical illness and sometimes death.



What if you could learn a few simple and completely natural techniques that would make all the difference to your stress levels?

How much better do you think you will feel as you learn to control your mind and body to release stress?

WHAT IS RELAXATION THERAPY?

Relaxation therapies give the body/mind the chance to do its own healing.

The body and mind can heal itself given the right conditions.

Relaxation therapy restores harmony and helps to create these conditions for optimum living. It is the releasing of physical and mental tensions. Some people need help and training to understand how to release the physical and mental tensions.

Relaxation therapy has a range of techniques to create a profound level of relaxation and through them, into an enhanced psychological integration.

Some of the methods and techniques go back thousands of years, while others are still being developed. But they are all based on the effect that the mind has on the body.

Relaxation therapies are non-intrusive and gentle and can help treat Arthritis, asthma, anxiety, depression, high and low blood pressure, mental and physical problems caused through stress and panic attacks.



HOW CAN I USE RELAXATION THERAPY AT HOME?

Essentially, Relaxation therapy is a series of techniques taken from various natural therapies to induce natural relaxation and to calm away any unnecessary stress that is stored in the body and mind.

These techniques are often very easy to do, provided that you have the correct steps to follow and make use of them when you can.

It is so easy to believe that each day is far too busy to incorporate any of these techniques into your daily life. With all the things listed on our 'To Do' list, it can be one of the last things that we think we will need (or have time) to do.

The first step to learning to use Relaxation therapy, is to taking a chance to try it out. By ignoring our Self, we are giving the signal that that we are not worth the time to improve our health, we are not worth a small amount of time to heal or to relax. Do you really feel this way? It is important to realize that you should be part of the 'To Do' list along with all the other points. You are worth a small amount of time to restore your energy so you can achieve your best and feel physically strong at all times.

The second step is to understand that many of these techniques are not time consuming. All it takes is a few adjustments to your daily routine to give your Self a minimum of half an hour a day, which can be spread out during the day. This is not a huge or unrealistic amount of time to spend when you think of the good short term and long term results.

Relaxation therapy is an enjoyable way to relax and a very personal to each person. What will work for you might not work for someone else. However, this guide will show you

techniques that have been very successful to a wide range of people.

Many people tend to assume that Relaxation therapy is mainly a massage based therapy. This is not true. There are many forms and techniques that do not involve massage therapy. This will give you the opportunity to do these techniques alone and during a time that is convenient to you.

With all this said, we now come to the practical aspects of using Relaxation therapy at home.

The following points are a few tips to help you use Relaxation therapy at home and to gain a good routine:

*Step 1: What times of the day is suitable for you?

Remember, a minimum of half an hour is an ideal amount of time to spend throughout the day for your relaxation. Most people find that the best times are first thing in the morning, during the lunch hour, last thing at night. Write down which times are best for you. Please keep in mind that you should be in a quiet and undisturbed environment where you can relax. Try to keep the same times each day if you can to adjust your body and mind.

*Step 2: Pick one exercise a day to try

This book offers several techniques to use. To start, pick one of these techniques to practice during the day. It is hard to know at first if this technique suits you, but with time you will soon find out if you like this technique.

*Step 3: Be patient

Like everything new, it does take patience to get used to this new addition to your routine. Do not be too hard on your Self if you find it difficult at first, just take a deep breath and try to enjoy each step.

*Step 4: Practice makes perfect!

In no time, you will automatically ease into your routine and feel the results. With practice, these techniques are easy and you will be able to make your own adjustments and additions to it.

*Step 5: Increase your time

If possible, you may wish to take this further and expand your time duration of using these relaxation techniques.

All the techniques provided are complete and very simple.

If you wish to explore more techniques or to be provided with a personal relaxation program or session, please contact the author.

Relaxation therapy can be easily used at home. However, many people feel that by visiting a Relaxation therapist, there is additional support and information to begin the journey to inner calm.

WHAT CAN A RELAXATION THERAPY CONSULTATION PROVIDE?

This is a wonderful chance to try these techniques and additional techniques in a safe and confidential environment.

Every consultation is a chance to discuss your needs with a qualified therapist. Through discussion, the therapist is then able to adjust techniques and information to suit the client.

RELAXATION THERAPY TECHNIQUES TO USE AT HOME

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

For this technique, you will need to be lying down. This is a wonderful technique to use especially when you are going to sleep. It uses the tension and relaxation of the muscles to achieve a subtle and effective stress relief sensation.

Place: Find a quiet room where you can work undisturbed.

Position: To learn progressive relaxation, all parts of your body must be comfortably supported. Find a bed, a couch, or a recliner.

Clothing: Wear loose clothing.

Time: Designate about fifteen minutes daily. Try to schedule a fixed time every day so you won't forget to do your progressive relaxation.

Focus: Try to focus on the particular sensations that come from letting go of tension.

Directions (you may want to record this on a tape to play):

Lie or sit in a comfortable position. I'm going to ask you to tense and relax various parts of your body. When I say TENSE, I'd like you to tense that body part. When I say RELAX, I'd like you to let go of all tension. Try to focus on one body part at a time.

Get in touch with your breathing. Breathe out, breathe in. Imagine that as each body part is relaxed, all tension is

gone. TENSE your toes. RELAX. TENSE your knees. RELAX. TENSE your right leg. RELAX. You should feel your whole leg relaxing and settling into the floor. TENSE your left leg. RELAX. Now TENSE your buttocks. RELAX. Press your lower back against the floor. RELAX. TENSE your stomach. RELAX. TENSE your rib cage. RELAX. Feel the tension gone in your lower body.

Push your shoulders back. RELAX. Pull your shoulders forward. RELAX. Now work on your arms. Make a fist with one hand. RELAX. TENSE that upper arm. RELAX. TENSE that whole arm. RELAX. Make a fist with the other hand. RELAX. TENSE that upper arm. RELAX. TENSE that whole arm. RELAX.

Now let's work on your face and head. Clench your jaw. RELAX. Open your mouth wide. RELAX. Grimace. RELAX. Scrunch up your whole face. RELAX. Eyes closed. RELAX. Eyes wide. RELAX. Now feel all the tension gone from everywhere in your whole body. Keep breathing. Breathe out. Breathe in. Feel completely relaxed.

SIMPLE MEDITATIONS FOR RELAXATION

For all meditation exercises:

Place: Find a quiet room where you can work undisturbed.

Position: There is a choice of positions. You may want to sit cross legged on a cushion (floor), sit with your back straight and legs extended in front of you (floor), sit in a straight chair with your legs firmly on the ground. With all positions, keep the spine straight. If needed, use the wall to support your back for floor positions.

Clothing: Wear loose clothing.

Time: Designate about five to ten minutes.

Focus: Try to focus on your breath, or a spot in between your eye, known as the third eye.

MEDITATION 1: WATCHING THE BREATH

After the preliminaries, concentrate on the tip of your nose, and feel the breath going in and out.

To help your concentration, you can count every out-breath as one, and count from 1 to 10. When you arrived at 10, simply start at 1 again. All the attention is with the feeling of the nose and the counting, nothing more, nothing less.

Regularly check your Self if you are still concentrated, do not get angry when distracted, simply return to counting from 1.

Just before the end of the session, release the concentration on the counting and the tip of your nose, and simply be aware of how you feel for a minute or so.

Then dedicate the positive energy of the session to whichever goal you like, use for example above prayers.

MEDITATION 2: MELTING BUTTER

It slowly melts, and wherever it runs down over your body, all stress and tension in the body disappears. Very slowly the butter flows over your forehead, all muscles relax... It runs down over your eyes and cheeks..., and your whole face relaxes. Along the back of your head... your neck... shoulders; feel how much tension is there and let it go.... Arms and hands.... the chest..., belly.... Along the spine, the entire back relaxes...your legs and feet... The entire body is covered in golden butter and you radiate health.

Go over the whole body again and breathe out all the remaining stress.

MEDITATION 3: ELIMINATING PAST AND PRESENT

Rest the hands, palms down on the legs and watch the breath

When the mind wanders off to thoughts of the past, gently tap your left leg

When the mind wanders off to thoughts of the future, gently tap your right leg.

Whenever a thought arises, mentally note "memory" or "fantasy", and then return to the breath.

MEDITATION 4: WATCHING THE SENSES

Focus the attention to your breath and sensory experiences.

Whenever you notice something, mentally note: "feeling", "hearing", "tasting", "smelling", "touching".

Note the senses, but do not start talking with yourself, only note the experience and go back to the breath.

MEDITATION 5: BODY OF LIGHT

Visualize above the crown of your head a white ball of light, somewhat smaller than your head. It has no real form and is pure white energy. Do not concentrate on details, just try to feel it is there.

Imagine that the light embodies all the pure love of the universe, the accomplishment of the highest potential of living beings.

Visualize the ball becomes smaller, about the size of your thumb, and it enters the crown of your head, and descends to the level of your heart.

Now the light expands and fills your entire body. All the

material of the body dissolves into light. What remains is a body of light without shape.

Concentrate on the feeling this light-body gives, all problems and negativities are gone, only peace and happiness is left.

When distracting thoughts arise, simply dissolve them in the light.

CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS

Every thought has a positive or negative reaction to our body. So imagine how your body feels after every bad thought you think of.

The good news is that we have the ability to control our thoughts. We have the choice to think positive thoughts and train our Self to see the positive side to every situation.

It might sound difficult, but by using affirmations, we can slowly alter the negative patterns in our mind.

What are affirmations? Affirmations are positive statements that are repeated to our Self (aloud or in our mind) to align our positive mind. These statements usually start with the words "I am" as a way of confirming our Self to the positive information.

Choose a simple affirmation that you can use daily to relax your Self when you feel you are becoming stressful.

A few examples:

I am now calm and relaxed

I am able to cope with any situation

I am strong and confident

Pick a statement that appeals to you.

The next time you are feeling tense, repeat this statement in your mind and use deep breathing. This can be done

anywhere... on the train, in your car, in a meeting... It is a subtle way to use relaxation without anyone even noticing!

The effect is that your body and mind will automatically respond to this positive thought and produce a much more relaxed and calm sensation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For many years, Linda has been interested in Holistic living and natural health.

Through her experiences abroad and living in many parts of the world, including the Middle East, Africa and Europe, Linda has enjoyed exploring a wide range of Holistic practices from different cultures.

Linda's love for natural health first began in 1996, when she joined a meditation class and natural health clinic. Linda began her work experience with experienced natural health therapists in many areas of natural health. In 2001, Linda began her own personal journey and commitment to Spiritual and Holistic living.

She graduated with various diplomas in Professional Relaxation therapy, Bates Method, Level 2 Chios Energy Field Healing and Traditional Chinese Massage. Many of these techniques may be used in Relaxation therapy and Stress management.

Linda is fully insured and a member of Association of Holistic and Complementary Practitioners (PAHCP), which requires training, ethics, code of conduct and continued education.

Linda is also a member of Associated Stress Consultants and British School of Yoga Associate. Although Linda has many interests in various natural health therapies, Relaxation therapy and Stress management is her main focus.

Linda continues to expand her knowledge and education. She is currently studying to become a Master Chios Energy Teacher.

Other interests include poetry, reading, travel, yoga and writing for various websites on relaxation therapy.

To contact Linda: lindakleida@gmail.com

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