

## RELAXATION EXERCISES

1. **DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE:** Clear your mind of all thoughts and look at some object around you. Take in a slow, deep breath, filling your lungs fully. Hold your breath for three seconds and then slowly exhale all the air in your lungs so they feel empty. Breathe in again and feel your abdomen rising, and then let your breath out and feel your abdomen slowly deflate. With every breath you take in, take in peace of mind, calm, contentment, and with every breath you exhale, exhale trouble, tension, and discontent. Continue doing this, maintaining all of your concentration on your breathing, for 15 minutes.
2. **DEEP MUSCLE RELAXATION EXERCISE:** Relax your body and get into a comfortable sitting position. Clear your mind of all thoughts. Tighten your right fist and hold the muscle tension for a count of three, and then let the tension go, noticing the feeling of your muscles relaxing. Now tighten your right elbow and shoulder for a count of three and then relax your muscles, feeling your shoulder sag and droop as it gives up the tension. Move on and tighten your left fist for a count of three and then relax those muscles slowly. Tighten your left elbow for a count of three and then relax it. Continue tightening the various muscles in your body for a count of three and then relax each muscle group. Each time only stay focused on the tightness in your muscles and the feeling of relaxation as they unwind. Notice the sagging feeling as you let your muscles relax. Do this exercise very slowly, taking at least 10 minutes to do it.
3. **AUTOGENIC EXERCISE:** Relax your body and remove all thoughts from your mind. Sitting in a comfortable position, tell your right foot that it feels heavy, so heavy that it is very hard to move. Feel the heaviness in that foot. Then tell your left foot the same message. Move up your body and tell each muscle group that same instruction, creating an overall feeling of heaviness in your body. Then, moving back to your toes, tell them they feel warm in addition to feeling heavy. Feel the warmth in your toes. Moving up your body again, tell each body part that it feels warm. Notice your whole body feeling heavy and warm. Move through these instructions slowly over several minutes.
4. **GUIDED IMAGERY:** Imagine being in an outdoor scene that you like or have seen in a book. Perhaps the scene is a beach, the mountains, or a park. Notice colors in the scene and let those colors relax you. Go from one part of the scene to another, slowly noticing the colors in that part of the scene. Notice how that color affects you. Move on to sounds in the scene and hold a sound, repeating it over and over. Notice how those sounds affect you. Now notice physical feelings in the scene. Perhaps it is the sun warming you, the feeling of a breeze blowing against you, or the feeling of grass or soft sand on your skin. Imagine feeling the different parts of the scene, noticing how the feeling of being touched affects you.