

# Relaxation Techniques

## Progressive Relaxation

--great to do with **Diaphragm Breathing**

1. Contract (so that you are aware of the tension of the muscle)
2. Completely Relax that portion of your body
  - Relax more with each breath
  - Feel your body getting heavier and sinking deeper with each breath
3. Include Every segment of the body
  - from toes,
  - through head,
  - and nose,
  - and inner eyeballs
4. Gradual onset back through each segment of the body
  - make sure that they are all still **fully** relaxed

## Diaphragm Breathing Therapy<sup>1</sup>:

**Purpose:** Relax Sympathetic nervous system. Speed removal of toxins from blood. Assist the function of all oxygen-dependant processes within the body.

### **Mechanism of healing:**

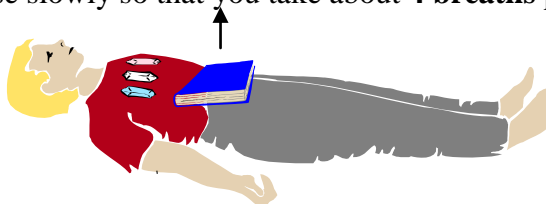
Two of the most powerful forces in your body are your breathing and your heart rate. Breath training has permanently alleviated asthma in some patients and has significantly helped almost every asthma sufferer who has regularly applied the technique.

Most of us have an unused reserve of about 20 percent in our lungs. These exercises work like at-home endurance training that enable your muscles to expel the stagnant air and draw in that extra 20%.

- Proper breathing signals the nervous system to relax.
- (Shallow rapid breathing triggers “Fight or Flight” sympathetic N.S. reactions. It also is a form of hyperventilation that leads to hypoxia, low oxygen in the blood and cells.)

### **Method:**

- Lie on your back so that you are relaxed.
- Place hardcover book (or hand) just below ribs.
- Breathe in through your nose (unless difficult due to cold or sinusitis)
  - Imagine that you are drawing in air **from the back of your throat**.
  - As you breathe in, try lifting book as high as you can with your stomach muscles
  - Keep chest muscles relaxed and motionless. (Your chest will expand somewhat at end.)
- As you exhale, use the same belly muscles to **squeeze every bit** of air from your lungs.
  - **Exhalation** should be **longer** than inhalation.
  - When nearing end, begin to “hum.” You can push out more air than you think.
- Do this exercise slowly so that you take about **4 breaths** per minute.



<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: *Reversing Asthma*, Richard N. Firshein, D.O. 1996.

# THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

- 1.) Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
- 2.) Close your eyes.
- 3.) Deeply relax all your muscles, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face. Keep them relaxed.
- 4.) Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word, "ONE," silently to yourself. For example, breathe IN...OUT, "ONE"; IN...OUT, "ONE"; etc. Breathe easily and naturally.
- 5.) Continue for 10 to 20 minutes. You may open your eyes to check the time, but do not use an alarm. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes, at first with your eyes closed and later with your eyes opened. Do not stand up for a few minutes.
- 6.) Do not worry about whether you are successful in achieving a deep level of relaxation. Maintain a passive attitude and permit relaxation to occur at its own pace. When distracting thoughts occur, try to ignore them by not dwelling upon them and return to repeating "ONE." With practice, the response should come with little effort. Practice the technique once or twice daily, but not within two hours after any meal, since the digestive processes seem to interfere with the elicitation of the Relaxation Response.

## Essential oil [and Epsom Salt] bath.

- (Use 2 pounds of Epsom salts per tub of hot water.)
- Add 10 drops Relaxing essential oil mixture.
- Emerge as much of your body as you can and make the water very hot. Relax for 20 minutes.
- When you get out, wrap yourself in a nice big, warm towel and lay down for at least 5 minutes.

## Therapeutic Self-Massage Therapy:

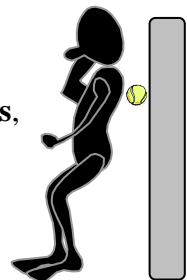
**Purpose:** Speed removal of toxins from muscles and promote relaxation.

**Mechanism of healing:**

Tight muscles (especially those that held your head up all day) have decreased blood flow. This results in increased buildup of toxins and decreased oxygen to the tissues. Soreness (and occasional headaches, etc.) results from irritation of the nerves within the muscle.

**Method:**

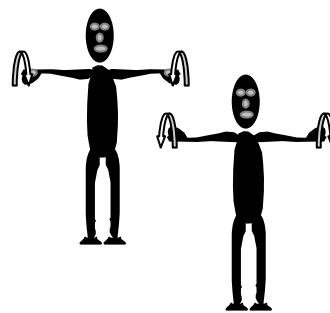
- Place a tennis ball between the wall and the muscles beside your spine.
- Move your body up and down with the ball next to your spine.
  - Lean against the wall.
    - The further your feet from the wall, the deeper the massage
- Experiment with leaning different parts of your back against the ball.
- Try lying on the floor or bed with the tennis ball under your **Shoulders, Hips**, etc. – rolling your body around on the ball.



## Reformatting Exercises<sup>2</sup>:

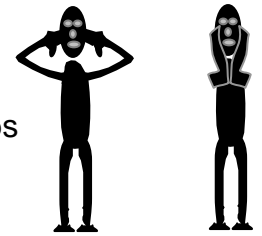
### 1. ARM CIRCLES

- Elbows straight, Palms down, Thumbs forward
- Squeeze shoulder blades together slightly.
- Rotate arms up and forward in 6 in. circles; 20 times.
- Then point thumbs backward, and do 20x, in rev.



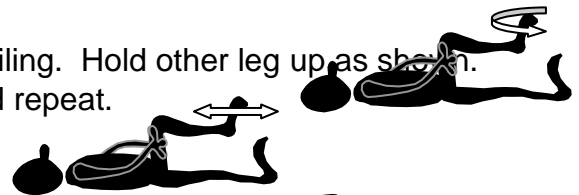
### 2. ELBOW CURLS

- Both hands in golfer's grip (finger's curled, thumb out).
- Raise hands, palms forward, so that flat area between 1st & 2nd knuckle joints of index and middle fingers rests on temples in front of ears. Thumbs down, parallel to cheeks
- Draw elbows back evenly, until in line w/ each other
- Slowly draw elbows forward until touching. Keep thumbs down.
- Again, draw elbows back evenly



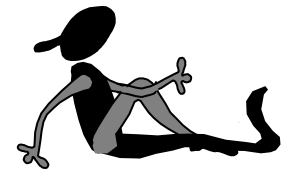
### 3. FOOT CIRCLES / POINT FLEXES

- One foot stays on floor with toes pointed toward ceiling. Hold other leg up as shown.
- Circle foot clockwise. Reverse direction (CCW) and repeat.
- Bring the toes back toward shin to FLEX.
- Reverse the direction to POINT.



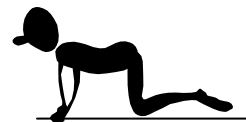
### 4. SITTING FLOOR TWIST

- Crossed foot flat and parallel to other leg
- Place elbow outside opposite knee
- Tighten muscles of straight leg, & flex ankle back toward knee.



### 5. CATS & DOGS

- Knees aligned w/ hips & wrists w/ shoulders
- Legs parallel with one another
- Distribute weight evenly.
- Smoothly round back up as head curls under.
- Smoothly drop back while bringing head up.
- Make two moves flow continuously.



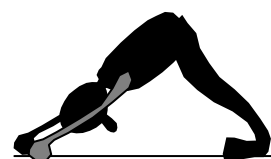
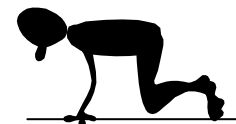
### 6. KNEELING GROIN STRETCH

- Head up. Back straight.
- Interlaced hands, palm-down on front knee.
- Keep hips square and avoid twisting trunk.
- Front knee equal to or behind ankle.



### 7. DOWNWARD DOG

- From "All-fours" position, curl toes under & push w/ legs to raise torso until off knees & weight is being supported by hands & feet.
- Keep pushing up until body forms a triangle.
- Knees straight; calves & thighs tight.
- Feet straight forward, in line with hands
- Back flat, not bowed. BREATHE.
- Heels as flat as you can, without forcing.



<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: *Pain Free*, Pete Egoscue. 1998

## Quiet Sitting / Journal Writing:

(Ideally, this time period will be interrupted only by a few moments of writing important ideas.)

### 1. First consider what to be **Thankful** for.

- Use the “Space for Gratitude” Or your personal journal.
- Consider those things that you had or have – things that were given to you, things that bring or have brought you **Joy, Opportunity, or even Awareness...**
- Consider each of these categories:
  - Socially & Religiously
  - Physically
  - Relationships
  - Employment
  - Environment, Activities
  - Books / Information
  - Opportunities / Trials

### 2. Then consider how to be **Loving** and/or **Forgiving** to others.

- in the relevant categories mentioned
- Recognize where you are not loving/forgiving; your health will improve when you are able to.
- jot these positive or negative things down

### 3. Briefly **Consider** your day, week, or month, etc. with respect to **things** that you **CAN influence**.

- **Release** those **things** over which you have **no influence**.
- Jot down your decisions or ideas.