

Learning to relax will help you to control your anxieties, cravings and fears and the tension associated with them. Relaxation is generally easier if you follow these guidelines:

- 1) The best time to listen to practice relaxation is during the daytime, when you are not exceptionally tired. Some even prefer to listen first thing in the morning before getting up. Experiment to see which is best for you. Just ensure that you are not so tired that you will fall to sleep.
- 2) Practice in a quiet environment. It is important that there is no danger of being disturbed, otherwise a tension might be created in the subconscious mind, which could act as a barrier to the successful induction of relaxation and self-hypnosis.
- 3) If you are physically or mentally very tired on retiring to bed, then you may fall to sleep before your breathing practice works sufficiently. On such days it may be preferable to practice earlier in the evening.
- 4) Avoid practising immediately after a meal.
- 5) Set time aside to practice regularly to improve your results. Optimum frequency of practice varies with the individual, but normally every day is recommended. Maximum twice a day.
- 6) After the first week it is fine to practice on alternative days.
- 7) Lie down with your body in a straight line, feet uncrossed, and eyes closed, or sitting upright with your hands in your lap or on the arms of the chair.
- 8) Enter your relaxation passively; don't think "I must relax". Just let it happen!
- 9) There is only one way in which relaxation won't be effective and that is if you cease to practice it. Otherwise it is bound to succeed. It is only a matter of time, and that time will vary with the individual, and therefore cannot be estimated in advance.
- 10) The biggest obstacle to practising relaxation regularly can be the subconscious itself. It may try to stop you practising or relaxing - or even attending sessions! The reason for this opposition from the subconscious is that it does not like change which it sees as a danger or threat to its survival. Do not be deceived by this. It is not a reasoning mind. However, your act of improvement or 'survival' (your relaxation practice, yoga practice, etc.), will demonstrate to the subconscious mind that the act is not a threat and it then withdraws its opposition.

SHORT RELAXATION (DEEP BREATHING)

Can be used anywhere; good for emergencies, i.e. at work:

Stand or sit comfortably,

-close your eyes

-relax your arms, shoulders and the rest of your body

- 1) -inhale through your nose filling your lungs into your belly for a count of 5, hold for a few seconds; breathe out for a count of 5

-repeat as necessary

EXTENDED RELAXATION (TENSE AND RELAX)

Sit or lie in a comfortable position,

-close your eyes

-practice deep breathing

Begin to tense the muscles in your body, holding them for 3 seconds then relaxing them. Start at one end of your body and work towards the other end.

You can interrupt this process and return to carry out more deep breathing at any time.