

The Good Relaxation Guide

Tips to help you unwind



DEALING WITH PHYSICAL TENSION

- Value times of relaxation. Think of them as essentials not extras. Give relaxation some of your best time not just what's left over.
- Build relaxing things into your lifestyle every day and take your time. Don't rush.

Don't try too hard.

- Learn a relaxation routine, but don't expect to learn without practice.
- There are many relaxation routines available, especially on audio tape. These help you to reduce muscle tension and to learn how to use your breathing to help you relax.
- Tension can show in many different ways — aches, stiffness, heart racing, perspiration, stomach churning etc. Don't be worried about this.
- Keep fit. Physical exercise, such as a regular brisk walk or a swim, can help to relieve tension.

DEALING WITH WORRY

- Accept that worry can be normal and that it can be useful. Some people worry more than others but everyone worries sometimes.
- Write down your concerns. Decide which ones are more important by rating each out of ten.
- Work out a plan of action for each problem.
- Share your worries. Your friends or your general practitioner can give you helpful advice.
- Doing crosswords, reading, taking up a hobby or an interest can all keep your mind active and positive. You can block out worrying thoughts by mentally repeating a comforting phrase.
- Practice enjoying quiet moments, e.g. sitting listening to relaxing music. Allow your mind to wander and try to picture yourself in pleasant, enjoyable situations.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

- Try to build up your confidence. Try not to avoid circumstances where you feel more anxious. A step by step approach is best to help you face things and places which make you feel tense. Regular practice will help you to overcome your anxiety.
- Make a written plan and decide how you are going to deal with difficult situations.
- Reward yourself for your successes. Tell others. We all need encouragement.
- Your symptoms may return as you face up to difficult situations. Keep trying and they should become less troublesome as your confidence grows.
- Everyone has good days and bad days. Expect to have more good days as time goes on.
- Remember that expert guidance and advice is available if you need further help.