

The benefits of relaxation techniques

When faced with numerous responsibilities and tasks or the demands of an illness, relaxation techniques may not be a priority in your life. But that means you might miss out on the health benefits of relaxation.

Practicing relaxation techniques can have many benefits, including:

- Slowing heart rate
- Lowering blood pressure
- Slowing your breathing rate
- Improving digestion
- Maintaining normal blood sugar levels
- Reducing activity of stress hormones
- Increasing blood flow to major muscles
- Reducing muscle tension and chronic pain
- Improving concentration and mood
- Improving sleep quality
- Lowering fatigue
- Reducing anger and frustration
- Boosting confidence to handle problems

To get the most benefit, use relaxation techniques along with other positive coping methods, such as thinking positively, finding humor, problem-solving, managing time, exercising, getting enough sleep, and reaching out to supportive family and friends.

There are several relaxation techniques but today we will focus on:

Progressive muscle relaxation

In this relaxation technique, your focus is on slowly tensing and then relaxing each muscle group. This can help you focus on the difference between muscle tension and relaxation. This allows for physical sensation awareness.

In one method of progressive muscle relaxation, you start by tensing and relaxing the muscles in your toes and progressively working your way up to your neck and head. You can also start with your head and neck and work down to your toes. Tense your muscles for about five seconds and then relax for 30 seconds, and repeat. This is based on your preference. I prefer laying down versus sitting and starting at my toes all the way to the top of my head.

With all that's been going on in the world in addition to now having to prepare for final projects and exams just around the corner, there's no better time to care about yourself than now!

Here is the link for the Berkeley progressive relaxation technique... This is how I got introduced to it... and this is still one of my favorite ones to follow to this day!

https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Progressive_Muscle_Relaxation.pdf

Or you can click on the following pre-recorded progressive relaxation techniques:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyxvL1O2duk> (head to toe)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=intVpw4LhMY&t=21s> (toe to head)