

RELAXATION TRAINING

Relaxation is a way of producing a quiet mind & a quiet body. It is an integral part of helping to reduce anxiety & stress. It can also assist in the management of many other distressing emotions such as anger, frustration, agitation & depression.

Relaxation has many benefits:

- Slows heart rate
- Reduces blood pressure
- Slows breathing rate
- Improves digestion
- Reduces muscle tension & chronic pain
- Reduces activity of stress hormones
- Improves blood flow to major muscles
- Maintains normal blood sugar levels

When practicing relaxation consider the following guidelines:

- There are many different types of relaxation. It is important to experiment with different techniques to find the one that works best for you.
- Try & find a time & place that is relatively free from distractions & interruptions. Turn your phone off, close the blinds, turn the lights off. People usually close their eyes, but if this doesn't feel comfortable, keep them open.
- Find a comfortable position. Sit in a comfortable chair or lie down, but don't fall asleep.
- Try & practice at the same time each day as this increases your chances of making it apart of your daily routine.
- Never "force" relaxation. Listen to the script & follow the instructions. If you find your mind is wandering, take note & gently bring your focus back to the relaxation script. It is normal when first practicing relaxation for our minds to stray. If you are harsh with yourself during relaxation, you are likely to feel distressed & thereby hinder yourself from attaining any of the benefits relaxation can bring.
- Relaxation is a skill that needs to be learned. It is unrealistic to expect that practicing relaxation on one or a few occasions will bring about a sudden & dramatic state of inner calmness & contentment. Therefore, in order to attain any of the benefits of relaxation you must be prepared to practice on a daily basis.
- Keep a record of your relaxation practice. By recording your stress & tension levels before & after relaxation practice, you can track your progress & determine whether relaxation is helping you in a meaningful & significant way.