

Relaxation Exercises

Relaxation exercises can be one of the most effective methods of combating the physical symptoms of test anxiety. While the techniques vary, the overall method involves a combination of controlling your breathing and relaxing your muscles. It can be helpful to visualize yourself in a calm and serene place.

You will find some links to websites that provide more information and additional relaxation techniques at the end of this page. To get started, try the following simple exercises:

- ❑ **Visualize a peaceful and relaxing setting.** This can be a specific place or scenery from the nature. Imagine you are there and think about how it makes you feel.
- ❑ **Practice taking long, deep breaths.** Breathe in through your nose, filling your diaphragm. Exhale slowly, and consciously release your tension as you exhale.
- ❑ **Focus on tension in a group of muscles.** As you inhale contract the group of tensed muscles (usually neck and shoulder area) for a few seconds.
- ❑ **Relax the tension.** As you exhale slowly, imagine that the tension is leaving your body. Repeat the exercise and try to relax the muscles longer each time.

To learn a progressive muscle relaxation and change your negative thinking or negative self-talk you might contact a counselor.

Additional Relaxation Techniques

The Praxis Series: Reducing Test Anxiety (2005). Educational Testing Services, ETS.

http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/reducing_test_anxiety.pdf

Relaxation Techniques (2010) University of Utah School of Medicine

<http://medicine.utah.edu/learningresources/tools/relaxation.php>