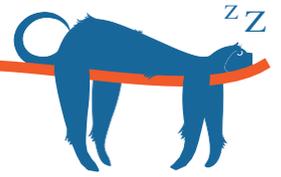


Relaxation techniques



How to switch your mind off and relax once you're in bed

STEP 1: BREATHING SLOWLY

- Make yourself comfortable in your bed.
- Lie on your back and just let your body go as floppy as possible.
- Rest your arms by your side.
- Think about your breathing.
- Take a deep breath in, hold it and count to three - then let your breath out slowly.
- Take another deep breath, hold it and count to four - then let your breath out slowly.
- Take one more deep breath, hold it and count to five - then as before, let your breath out slowly.

STEP 2: RELAXING YOUR BODY

- Breathe normally in and out
- Clench your fists - then unclench your hands so that you feel all the muscles in your fingers relax.
- Tense all the muscles in your arms, right down from your shoulders and then hold for one breath in and out.
- Relax your arms.
- Tense all the muscles across your chest and hold for one breath in and out.
- Relax your chest.
- Tense and hold all the muscles in the lower half of your body and hold that for one breath in and out.
- Relax your lower body
- Clench your toes and feet and hold for one breath in and out.
- Relax your toes and feet.

Your breathing should now be nice and slow and your body should feel relaxed.....

STEP 3: RELAXING YOUR MIND

- Think about a place where you usually feel happy and relaxed.
- It can be somewhere that you have been already like;
 - where you went on holiday
 - your granny's sofa, watching TV
- Or you can make up a place in your imagination – somewhere peaceful like;
 - a beach
 - a dark green forest
 - a fluffy cloud in the sky
 - floating on an inflatable in the middle of a swimming pool
- Make the picture as clear as you can in your mind
- Let your body relax even more
- When you breath out you can think of the word 'calm' with

Practice this routine in bed each night and like any routine, your body will get used to it and you should start to find it easier to relax and get to sleep.

OTHER THINGS TO TRY

- Counting sheep (or anything else you want to count) in your head. Picture what your counting as clearly as you can.
- Thinking of a name (or a fruit or a vegetable) beginning with each letter of the alphabet. Don't worry if you miss a few out.
- Counting backwards from 300 (or any number you choose).