

RELAXATION EXERCISES

Focus on your natural breathing pattern.

- Now breathe deeply, completely filling up your lungs. Then breathe in steadily and deeply through your nose and let the breath out slowly and steadily through your mouth.
- Continue this pattern and with each breath imagine you are bringing in calm, soothing, positive air to your lungs with a refreshing and cleansing sensation. Then imagine with each breath out you are releasing angry, tense, stressful, negative feelings or painful sensations.
- Once you have mastered this breathing technique then choose a word or phrase to use as you breathe in and repeat it ...try *calm, peace, relax*.
- Sometime it helps to imagine a relaxing place or experience like lying on a beach or in a pool or floating above clouds.

On the next page are some additional muscle relaxation exercises.

Additional muscle relaxation exercises.

- If you want to release any additional stress or tension in your muscles then use this simple exercise. This is a shortened version of progressive muscle relaxation/body-scanning.
- Sit in a comfortable chair or lie down (but this is not to sleep!).
- Picture all the tension leaving your body as you do these exercises. Use the breathing techniques above to relax you in between tensions.
- Start at your head and tense your facial muscles by clenching your teeth and frowning, hold for a few seconds then completely release the tension and continue breathing technique.
- Shrug your shoulders up (if you can) and tuck in your chin, hold for a few seconds then completely release the tension and continue breathing technique.
- Make fists (if you can) and tense your arm muscles, hold for a few seconds then completely release the tension and continue breathing technique.
- Clench your buttock muscles for a few seconds then release and continue breathing technique.
- Tighten the muscles at the front of your thighs, pushing the backs of your knees into the bed for a few seconds before completely releasing the tension and continue the breathing technique.
- Pull up your feet and toes towards your shins and hold for a few seconds then release the tension and continue the breathing technique.
- Now relax, continue slow, steady breathing and enjoy the feeling of softness, comfort and peace in your mind and body.