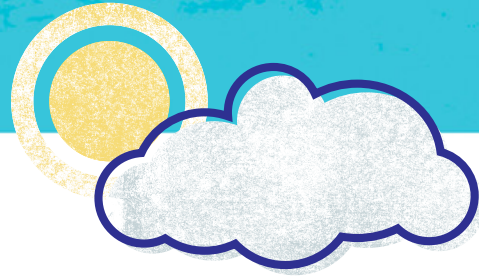


Relaxation Skills

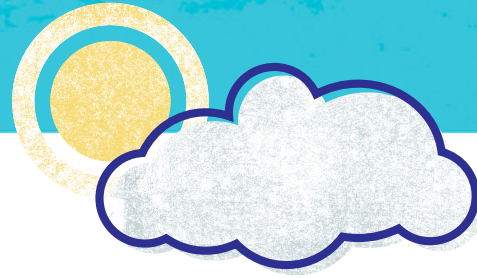
Relaxation Skills



Relaxation skills like deep breathing, “squeeze and release” and guided meditation can help us to feel calm when we are feeling stressed or anxious. Draw pictures or write about the things that cause you to feel stressed or worried:

Relaxation Skills

Relaxation Skills



Write or Discuss:

1. When are times that relaxation skills would be helpful for you?

2. Why are relaxation skills important to use when we are feeling stressed or anxious?

Practice: Sit in a comfortable seat in your chair or cross-legged on the floor. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Breathe in slowly through the nose for 4 seconds and fill our belly like a balloon. Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 5 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

How do you feel?

Relaxation Skills

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Paced Belly Breathing

Breathing deeply into your belly helps to tell your body that you are safe and calm. Practice paced belly breathing when you are feeling calm and when you are feeling stressed or anxious.



- 1** Sit in a comfortable seat in your chair or cross-legged on the floor.
- 2** Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest.
- 3** Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 seconds and feel your belly push outward like a balloon filling with air.
- 4** Slowly breathe out for 5 seconds through your mouth, letting the air gently leave your body.
- 5** Repeat 3-5 times, or for as long as you want.

Relaxation Skills

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3 Ways I Can Relax My Body

1 Belly Breathing

Taking deep, slow, steady breaths can help you relax and feel less nervous. Use your lower belly muscles to help control breathing in a slow and steady manner to help calm your body down.

What To Do:

1. Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly.
2. Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose. As you breathe in, the hand on your chest will stay **still**, and the hand on your belly will **rise** and expand outward.
3. Slowly release your breath out through your mouth. Your belly will shrink back in toward you again.
4. Repeat 10x or more, depending on your needs.

2 Squeeze and Release

Tensing and then releasing the different muscles in your body step-by step can release tension, help you feel more relaxed or help you fall asleep.

What To Do:

1. Start with your hands and work your way through each muscle group one at a time.
2. Tense and squeeze the selected muscles for 10 seconds — then release.
3. Repeat each muscle group 2 times:
 - Upper & lower arms
 - Head & face
 - Shoulders
 - Upper & lower legs
 - Belly
 - Feet
 - Lower legs

Relaxation Skills

2

3 Ways I Can Relax My Body

3 Visit Your Happy or Safe Place

Think of a relaxing place when you want to feel calm (the beach, the forest, your bedroom, etc.)

What To Do:

1. Imagine you are there in that moment.
2. Bring all the details of your special place into your mind by focusing on your five senses to make the experience more vivid.

Helpful Tip: Remember to cope ahead! **Plan to use relaxation skills for upcoming situations** that you might be nervous or stressed about to help you feel better **before** and **during** it.



Relaxation Skills

Relaxation Script for Younger Children



Hands & Arms

Pretend you are squeezing a whole lemon in your left hand. Squeeze it hard. Try to squeeze all the juice out. Feel the tightness in your hand and arm as you squeeze. Now drop the lemon and relax. See how much better your hand and arm feel when they are relaxed. Repeat the other hand.

Arms and Shoulders

Pretend you are furry, lazy cat. You want to stretch. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Raise them up high over your head. Way back. Feel the pull in your shoulders. Stretch higher. Now just let your arms drop back to your side. Okay, kitten, stretch again. Repeat.

Shoulder and Neck

Now pretend you are a turtle. You're sitting out on a rock by a nice, peaceful pond, just relaxing in the warm sun. It feels nice and warm and safe here. Oh-Oh! You sense danger. Pull your head into your house. Try to pull your shoulders up to your ears and push your head down into your shoulders. Hold in tight. It isn't easy to be a turtle in a shell. The danger is past now. You can come out into the warm sunshine and once again you can relax and feel the warm sunshine. Watch out now. More danger. Hurry pull your head back into your house and hold it tight. Repeat.

Jaw

You have a giant jawbreaker bubble gum in your mouth. It's very hard to chew. Bite down on it. Hard! Let your neck muscles help you. Now relax. Just let your jaw hang loose. Notice how good it feels just to let your jaw drop. Okay, let's tackled that jawbreaker again now. Repeat.

References: Carkhuff, R.R. Helping and human relations, Vol. 1, New York: Holt, Riverhart & Winston, 1969.

Relaxation Skills

Relaxation Script for Younger Children



Face and Nose

Here comes a pesky old fly. He has landed on your nose. Try to get him off without using your hands. That's right, wrinkle up your nose. Make as many wrinkles in your nose as you can. Scrunch your nose up real hard. Good. You've chased him away. Now you can relax your nose. Oops here he comes back again. Repeat.

Stomach

Hey! Here comes a cute baby elephant. But he's not watching where he's going. He doesn't see you lying there in the grass, and he's about to step on your stomach. Don't move. You don't have time to get out of the way. Just get ready for him. Make your stomach very hard. Tighten up your stomach muscles real tight. Hold it. It looks like he going to the other way. You can relax now. Let your stomach go soft. Let it be as relaxed as you can. That feels so much better. Oops, he's coming this way again. Get ready. Repeat.

Legs and Feet

Now pretend you are standing barefoot in a big, fat mud puddle. Squish your toes down deep in to the mud. Try to get your feet down to the bottom of the mud puddle. Relax your feet. Let your toes go loose and feel how nice that is. It feels good to be relaxed. Repeat...

References: Carkhuff, R.R. Helping and human relations, Vol. 1, New York: Holt, Riverhart & Winston, 1969.

Relaxation Skills

Relaxation Skills Practice

Practice these relaxation skills with a family member:

- 1 Belly Breathing**
- 2 Squeeze and Release**
- 3 Calm Place**



Bonus: Relaxation Skill Tracker

Select the relaxation skill or skills you used each day during the week. Talk to your family about why you needed to use a relaxation skill that day.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<input type="checkbox"/> Belly Breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Belly Breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Belly Breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Belly Breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Belly Breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Belly Breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Belly Breathing
<input type="checkbox"/> Squeeze and Release	<input type="checkbox"/> Squeeze and Release	<input type="checkbox"/> Squeeze and Release	<input type="checkbox"/> Squeeze and Release	<input type="checkbox"/> Squeeze and Release	<input type="checkbox"/> Squeeze and Release	<input type="checkbox"/> Squeeze and Release
<input type="checkbox"/> Guided Imagery	<input type="checkbox"/> Guided Imagery	<input type="checkbox"/> Guided Imagery	<input type="checkbox"/> Guided Imagery	<input type="checkbox"/> Guided Imagery	<input type="checkbox"/> Guided Imagery	<input type="checkbox"/> Guided Imagery

Relaxation Skills

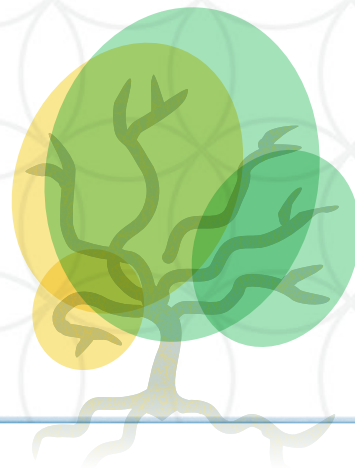
Guided Imagery

Option 1: Use the box below or a separate piece of paper to draw or write about a safe, imaginary place. Ask someone in your family to read this out loud slowly as you imagine your safe place:

Find a comfortable seat in your chair or cross-legged on the floor. Close your eyes or find a soft gaze in front of you. Breathe in deeply and slowly through your nose, filling your belly like a balloon. Breathe out slowly through your mouth. Continue to breathe deeply as you imagine a place in your mind that brings you a sense of calm and stillness. This could be a familiar place, like your grandma's living room, or an imaginary place like your own private beach. Use your senses to notice what you see, feel, hear, smell and taste in your imaginary safe place. Continue to enjoy your calm, safe place as you breathe deeply for as long as you'd like and, when you feel at peace, bring your mind back to your body and slowly open your eyes.

Option 2: Use this guided imagery script about a park. Ask someone in your family to read this out loud slowly as you imagine what they are describing!

Imagine that you're sitting under a tree at your favorite park. The air is cool and refreshing and there is a gentle breeze flowing over your skin. The sun is shining and feels warm on your body and you can see white, fluffy clouds floating slowly across the bright, blue sky. Maybe a colorful butterfly lands on your toes. You can feel the grass beneath your legs and smell the scent of freshly fallen leaves around you. Breathe in slowly through your nose and out slowly through your mouth. Notice the sounds of the park – birds singing, children laughing, maybe the ice cream truck passing by in the distance. Yummmm, imagine taking a big, sweet taste of your favorite flavor! You lay back and stretch your body as you continue to soak in the warmth of the sun and the softness of the grass, breathing slowly as the breeze flows over you. You feel calm and relaxed in your safe, imaginary place.



Relaxation Skills

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Guided Imagery

Directions: Draw or write in the box below or on a separate piece of paper about your imaginary safe place. Remember to include your five senses: what do you see, hear, smell, touch and taste?

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed border, intended for a child to draw or write about their imaginary safe place. The box is positioned in the lower half of the page, below the directions. The background of the page features a repeating pattern of overlapping circles in the bottom right corner.

Relaxation Skills

When Can I Use My Relaxation Skills?

Directions: Talk with a family member, write about, or draw times when you can use your relaxation skills.

