



## Relaxation

### What is relaxation?

We are all born knowing how to be relaxed since relaxation is a state of being rather than an activity. Relaxation creates measurable bodily changes such as a reduction in oxygen consumption, blood pressure, heart/respiratory rate, muscle tension, and an increase of serotonin which leads to feelings of calmness and wellbeing. Most of us instinctively know how to achieve relaxation, whether it is through leisure activities or simply doing nothing.

Here are some tips on how to relax:

### A relaxing environment

We all need to relax in different ways, as we all have different needs, but it can be simple to make some small changes, which will help everyone who enters a space/room.

- Room temperature – warm/cool
- Soft calming sounds - chill-out music/nature's sounds.
- Visually relaxing images - DVDs
- Relaxing colours - pastels.
- Soft furnishings – low lighting/relaxing seating.
- Plants – shadows & aromas
  
- Introduce slow gentle movement like water.
- Aromas such as fresh air, coffee, or new bread.
- Relaxing items to hold & touch.
- Noise pollution – put up notes reminding individuals a relaxing session is in progress.
- Company- the right type!

### Take time out – Simple 5 min mind & body 'holiday'

Allow yourself a five-minute wind down and you'll be amazed out how much more focused, relaxed and energised you will feel

- Sit relaxed both feet on the floor.
- Allow your shoulders to drop and rest your hands by your side.
- Take a deep breath in.
- Exhale through your mouth.
- Notice if there is tension in your upper body.
- Tighten and relax these muscles.

- Imagine there is a large LIGHT floating just above your head.
- It is warm and sparkles.
- Open your mind, and create a small hole in the top of your head
- Imagine the entering your mind.
- As it shines inside your head, you feel the warmth.
- Tension flows down as you feel the warmth flow down into your neck.
- Neck tension is flowing down your body as the light works its way down to your chest.
- The warmth dissolves tension in your back/shoulders as it works its way to your stomach.
- You feel your head shoulders and chest all relaxing.
- The warm light is now flowing down your arms and legs.
- All tension is flowing out of your feet and fingertips onto the floor

Now sit for a moment feeling the warmth and relaxation. All the tension has ended up outside your body, and on the floor. Take a moment and enjoy your relaxed mind and body. Remember this sensation and keep it in a safe place to be used again when needed. If possible, get some water and you should be feeling calmer, less tense, and more relaxed. Returning to this place will benefit you but it can also work for the individual you support and has the added benefit of encouraging them to rehydrate afterwards!

None of the techniques explained here are harmful, so feel free to share them.... at work or home!

**If you would like to discuss the information included in this resource, please call the NAPA Helpline; our free and confidential activity support service.**

