



# RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

❶ **BREATHING:** Proper breathing is an antidote to stress. It cleanses and refreshes your body. This technique is portable and easy to do.

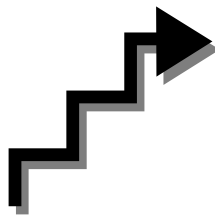
1. Begin by sitting or standing up straight.
2. **Inhale** a breath through your nose, expanding your diaphragm. A good tip is your stomach will rise when you inhale.
3. Hold the breath briefly.
4. Slowly **exhale** through the mouth, allowing your stomach to fall.
5. As you exhale tell yourself "my body is relaxed & calm."

❷ **PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION (PMR):** PMR helps to condition our body to respond when muscles are tense. This technique can be practiced lying down or in a chair. Here are some examples of how to tense muscle groups. This exercise is not limited to these muscle groups. Work your way from head to toe.

**Separately tense your:**

## HEAD

1. Wrinkle your forehead.
2. Squint your eyes tightly.
3. Open your mouth wide.
4. Push your tongue against the roof of your mouth.
5. Clench your jaw tightly.



## THIGHS, CALVES ANKLES and FEET

1. Tighten your thigh muscles, trying not to involve abdominal muscles.
2. Tense the calf muscles.
3. Point your toes out directly in front of you, feeling the tension in your ankles.
4. Curl your toes under, as if to touch the bottom of your feet.
5. Bring your toes up as if to touch your knees

❸ **VISUALIZATION:** You can significantly reduce stress with your imagination. In creating your own special place you can make a retreat for relaxation guidance. Here are a few guidelines:

- ❑ Allow a private entry into your place.
- ❑ Make it peaceful, comfortable and safe.
- ❑ Fill your place with sensuous detail.
- ❑ Allow room for an inner guide or other person to comfortably be with you.
- ❑ Check out the McKinley's Relaxation Room at the OASIS, Illini Union, lower level. It will take you through a 20 minute audio-visual guided imagery experience.

❹ **MASSAGE:** Massages can help you relax by increasing blood flow to your tension areas (i.e. shoulders, back, and neck). Increased blood flow relaxes muscles and removes build-up of waste products caused by tension.

❺ **MUSIC:** Select some soothing, calming music to listen to. Often music can help us relax and retreat from our stress for awhile.

❻ **EXERCISE:** Physical activity can help relieve tension and refresh the body. Get a good 30-45 minute workout at least 3 days a week. While you are studying, be sure to take periodic breaks, such as, a brisk walk, which will help rejuvenate your body and make you more productive.