

Basic Instruction for Systematic Relaxation

A complete systematic relaxation should last 8 to 12 minutes.

Rest on your back with the legs parted 12 to 18 inches and arms slightly away from the body with the hands relaxed and palms facing up. Close the eyes and relax completely.

Use a folded blanket under the head when the neck needs additional support and to be comfortable. Use a rolled blanket under the knees when the lower back needs additional support to be in a neutral and comfortable position.

Bring awareness to each of the following areas and rest briefly at each one.

- Crown of the head
- Forehead, sides and back of the head
- Ears, temples
- Eyebrows, eyelids, eyes
- Nose (rest for a few breaths)
- Cheeks, jaw
- Mouth, lips, tongue
- Chin, throat
- Sides and back of neck
- Pit of throat, shoulders
- Upper, lower arms
- Hands, fingers, fingertips (rest for a few breaths)
- Hands and arms
- Chest, sides, upper back
- Lungs, heart, heart center (rest for a few breaths)
- Abdomen, sides, lower back
- Buttocks, lower abdomen, hips
- Hip joints, upper legs
- Lower legs, feet, toes (rest for a few breaths)

Travel back upward through legs, spine, back, shoulders, neck, head and crown of the head, resting and relaxing more deeply.

Breathe as if the whole body breathes. Relax mental effort.

When ready, take a deeper breath and wiggle the fingers and toes. Roll to one side and rest on your side for a couple of breaths.

Gently come up to sitting, and sit with the eyes closed. Relax the body and breath, and watch the flow of breath for a minute or two.