

Producing the Relaxation Response

Deep Breathing Exercise Instructions

- 1) Lie or sit in a comfortable, quiet place where you won't be disturbed.
- 2) Mentally scan your body for tension and rate yourself on the tension thermometer (0, totally relaxed; 100, as tense as you have ever been).
- 3) Take in a deep breath, hold it to the count of 5, then slowly exhale – feeling yourself relax all over. Breathe from the low diaphragm, so that your stomach rises as you inhale.
- 4) Do this two or three times in a slow unhurried way.
- 5) Attend to your awareness for a few minutes. Say “Now I am aware of ...” (complete the sentence with whatever you are aware of at that moment).
- 6) Play with your awareness by switching back and forth from things inside you to outside you. Notice the degree to which you are aware of fantasies inside your own head. Do this in an unhurried way.
- 7) Let your awareness settle on the sensations of your breathing. Breathe slowly, rhythmically, and deeply. When you become aware of fantasies or other sensations, simply return your attention to breathing. Be particularly aware of the sensation of relaxation each time you exhale.
- 8) If you find it helpful and relaxing, think the word “calm” to yourself each time you exhale.
- 9) After about 15 minutes, begin to rouse yourself by first moving your hands and feet, then your legs and arms, then stretching.
- 10) Before opening your eyes, give yourself another rating on the tension thermometer.