

Adult Self Care Relaxation Pack

Solo Exercises

Breathing

Breathing

- Deep breathing helps to reduce stress and increase our ability to cope.
- Place your hands on your tummy, below your ribs and breath slowly in and out, noticing how your chest moves in relation to your breathing.
- The breaths should be as slow as possible, without it becoming uncomfortable – try breathing in for 5 seconds through your nose, and then out for 5 seconds through your mouth.
- Having a focus on something can be useful when deep breathing, or you may choose to close your eyes.

Breathing Buddy

- Lay on your back and place an object on your stomach. Soft toys or a cushion work well.
- Focus your attention on the rise and fall of the object as you inhale and exhale.
- If you want, count “1, 2, 3” for each breath in and each breath out
- Think about:
 - Is your object moving up and down?
 - Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?
 - Can you feel the air moving out through your nose?
 - Does the air feel colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
 - Can you hear your breath?
 - What does it sound like?



Hot chocolate breathing

- Pretend you are holding a cup of hot chocolate
- Breathe in for a count of five through your nose. Try to imagine the delicious chocolatey smell of your hot chocolate
- Breathe out through your mouth for a count of five, pretending to blow the hot chocolate cool
- Repeat this exercise four or five times, until you relaxed

Balloon Breathing

- Pretend you have a balloon inside your stomach
- Breathe in through your nose for five seconds, imagine filling the balloon with air
- The, breathe out for five seconds through your mouth slowly, letting the air out
- Repeat the exercise four to five times until you feel relaxed



Bubble Breathing

This exercise helps you to deep breathe.

Get a straw, and a cup half-filled with water.

Follow these steps:

1. Breathe in slowly through your nose for three counts.
2. Hold your breath for 2 counts.
3. Breathe out slowly through your mouth into the straw for 3 counts (making bubbles).

Star Breathing

- Spread one hand out like a star
- Use the index finger on your other hand to trace the outline of your star hand
- Take a deep breath in through the nose as you move to the top of your thumb
- Breathe out through the mouth as you move down between your thumb and first finger
- Take another breath in as you move to the top of your first finger
- Breathe out as you move down between your first and second finger
- Repeat until you have taken five, slow deep breaths
- The video link below explains and demonstrates the technique:
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=sh79w9pn9Cg

Volcano Breathing

- Stand up and put your hands in front of your body palm to palm
- Breathe in slowly through your nose and raise your arms up in pencil shape whilst bending your knees
- Then breathe out through your mouth whilst opening your arms to let the volcano out
- Then slowly lower your arms so they are by your side and straighten your legs
- Repeat this until you feel calm



Mindfulness

Grounding

Find a comfy spot – outside if you can. Sit in a relaxing position.

Close your eyes and take three deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.

- What can you hear?
- What can you smell?
- What can you feel? (the floor through your feet? The wind on your face?)
- Now open your eyes, what can you see?

You can do this exercise any time you feel like you need to relax!

Palming

- Rub your hands together to warm them up for about 15 seconds
- Cup your hands, and place them over your eyes gently – don't press into your eyes
- Hold this position for 30 seconds to 2 minutes
- The more relaxed you become, the blacker the darkness you will see with your closed eyes
- This exercise brings rest and relaxation to your eyes

I am...

- Think of three positive things you can say about yourself.
- Write them down on paper and stick them on your mirror.
- Look in the mirror and read out your positives to yourself.
- You can leave them stuck there so you can see them every morning when you look in the mirror. Come back to them when you need a little boost.

Example: I am loved, I am caring, I am happy

Gratitude

- Draw or write three things that you are thankful for today. It can be anything you like.
- For example, "I am thankful for my family's health" or "I am thankful for the sunshine today".
- Try keeping a daily gratitude journal and write three things you are thankful for before you go to sleep each night or when you wake up.



My Kind Words

- With your partner/friend/family write down something that you love about each other. Put their name on the front and fold it up.
- You can put your notes in a jar for each other to look at when they are feeling down.
- If you like, you can write kind notes for your future self to read!

Imagery

Imagination is a great way to slow down your mind and help release any worries. These exercises will help you to practice using your imagination to relax.

My Favourite Scent

- Find a comfy and quiet spot to sit in.
- Imagine your favourite smell, maybe a food you like or the smell of your favourite candle. Think of the smell that makes you feel peaceful and safe.
- Imagine taking in that smell with each breath and sending it throughout your entire body as you exhale.
- Continue this until you are filled with your special smell and you feel peaceful and relaxed.

Colour Breathing

- Imagine your favourite colour, the colour that makes you feel peaceful and safe.
- Imagine taking in that colour with each breath and sending it throughout your entire body as you exhale.
- Continue this until you can see yourself being filled with your relaxing colour.

Light Breathing

- Imagine a light straight ahead of you. That's all you can see.
- Start with a bright light and as you breathe in it gets dimmer and dimmer until it's just a candlelight.
- Then breath out, and slowly watch the light grow and become brighter and brighter again.

Whole Body Relaxation

Muscle Relaxation

- This exercise involves tighten and relaxing muscle groups to bring your awareness to your body, and how it different it feels when you are relaxed and stressed.
- Practice this with which ever parts of your body become tense when you are angry or anxious
- Progressively tighten the muscles of that body part, and then slowly relax them back to normal. Repeat four or five times.



Body Scan

- Bring your focus to your body and take a few deep breaths.
- You can close your eyes if you'd like.
- Notice how you are sitting or laying, feel the weight on your body supported by the chair or the ground.
- Bring your attention to your feet, notice how they feel, can you feel the pressure of them on the floor? Are they warm, cold, or just right?

- Now begin to notice your legs. Do they feel heavy or light? Are they resting on the chair, can you feel the weight of your hands on your lap?
- Notice your back against the chair and how supported it is.
- Bring your attention into your stomach. Take a deep breath and feel your tummy get bigger and smaller as you breathe in and out.
- Now think about your hands, are they tense? See if you can relax them.
- Notice your arms and shoulder, are they scrunched up? Can you loosen them?
- Notice your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.
- Now move into your face and head. Let your facial muscles be soft.
- Now bring your attention to your body as a whole. Take one more breath.
- You can stay like this as long as you like. When you are ready, open your eyes and come back into the room.

Partner Exercises

Lotion massage

You can do this exercise with a partner or own your own.

- Check your partner's, or you own hands to see if there is anything you want to take care of, any cuts or bruises for example.
- Warm up your hands by rubbing them together and gently rub a small amount of lotion onto your partner or you own hands.
- Can you see any freckles or birthmarks that you've not seen before?
- Massage your partner's or your own hand until all the lotion is rubbed in.
- You might even like to draw a picture or write a word in the lotion with your finger. Can your partner guess what it is?

Positive Touch: Weather Massage

Massage is a wonderfully connecting form of relaxation. To give you inspiration for massage strokes, it helps to think of a narrative (e.g. making a pizza/going to the zoo). Below is a weather massage. You can use the suggested hand strokes, or you can come up with your own. Go with the flow!

Pretend you are outside, and the weather keeps changing

- With your partner, take turns to be the "weather" who massages the "person outside"
- Once upon a time there was a big, yellow sun...
 - With one hand on the shoulder, take the other hand and make a circle clockwise on the back
- ...that warmed the whole world
 - Make "rays" to the sides
- But look, clouds appear and cover the sun
 - Make small circles with fingertips
- Then the wind comes, and blows harder... and harder...and harder
 - Stroke with hand from side to side, harder and harder
- ...until the wind turned into a tornado and hurricane
 - Make spiral with finger, starting in the centre of the back, getting bigger, harder and faster
- Then came the lightning
 - Make lightning bolt shape with finger
- ...And thunder
 - Clap hands on back gently
- Then came the rain...
 - Begin at shoulders and stroke down with fingertips





- And it rained harder, and harder
 - Same as above but harder and faster
- Until the rain turned into hail...and more hail
 - “play” with fingers on back... harder and harder
- Then it began to snow, and everything was white and beautiful
 - Pad clenched fists on back gently and slowly
- And the only thing to see was the cat that climbed up to the roof of the house
 - Climb hands up back towards neck
- Finally fog appeared
 - Swish hands round back
- Until the sun came out and warmed earth again
 - Make large circle with one hand on back



Cotton Wool Blowing

- Sit opposite your partner and cup your hands in front of you, with your palms facing up
- Place a piece of cotton wool in the palms of your hands
- Breathe in through your nose and slowly out through your mouth
- As you breathe out, pass the cotton wool over to your partners hands nice and gently
- Remember not to blow too hard or the cotton wool will not land nicely into your partners hand

Mirroring

- Sit opposite your partner and decide who is going to be the leader
- Both hold your hands out palms facing each other about 10 cm apart from each other
- The leader then moves their hands and arms slowly for their partner to follow and mirror
- Take slow deep breaths during this activity
- You can then repeat and swap who is the leader