

# RETRACKING



*This download is about anxiety, particularly learning how to relax!*

*You should look at the other files too, and save this to disk, or print it out.*

**1**

*The first three pages are about how things that happen to you, affect your mood making you anxious, or sad, or angry. It also looks at how you think about yourself and situations.*

**2**

*The rest is about relaxation. Learning new skills on your own is difficult, though not always impossible. Learning to relax takes time. This handout gives one way of relaxing, there are many more...*

**3**

*Lots of practice helps, and/or getting a coach or some sort of teacher (could be a friend) may help you learn a new skill.*

**4**

*If you find this type of relaxation does not help, look at the others files get yourself some direct help, try asking others what helps, or talk to someone.*

**5**

*That's all!*

# SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS

Sometimes we're "up" and sometimes we're "down" ... that's life!

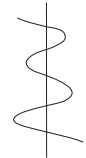
Think about your average day and record your mood swings from the moment that you wake in the morning and the time that you eventually go to sleep at night.

List the high and low points which occur during your day, at the appropriate times.

Draw a curving line to join these points, e.g.



WAKE



SLEEP



LOWS

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS



NORMAL

WAKE



HIGHS

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

SLEEP



I'M JUST USELESS AT EVERYTHING... THERE'S NO POINT IN TRYING.

IT'S EVERYBODY ELSE'S FAULT, NOBODY UNDERSTANDS  
ME SO WHY SHOULD I BOTHER?

SCHOOL IS A WASTE OF TIME... I'LL NEVER ACHIEVE ANYTHING THERE.

I'VE JUST BEEN BORN WITH THIS AWFUL TEMPER,  
THERE'S NOTHING THAT I CAN DO ABOUT IT.

I'VE ALWAYS HAD PROBLEMS WITH MY READING AND SPELLING...  
THEY ALL THINK THAT I'M STUPID.

NOBODY CARE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO ME.

I'LL NEVER GET WHAT I WANT OUT OF LIFE.

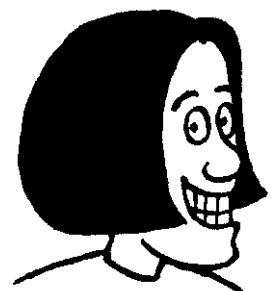
I JUST DON'T SEEM TO BE ABLE TO MAKE OTHER PEOPLE LISTEN TO ME.

NONE OF MY TEACHERS WANT TO HELP ME...  
THEY ALWAYS TAKE ME THE WRONG WAY.

- ... are these some of the thoughts that go through your head?
- ... do you really think that your situation is totally hopeless?
- ... would you like some help to change things for the better?

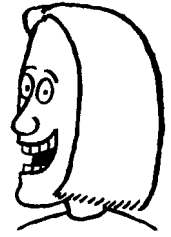
IN SECTION 3 LET'S MOVE ON TOGETHER AND DISCOVER  
SOME WAYS OF THINKING AND LIVING MORE POSITIVELY.

TURN THE PAGE FOR SOME  
**POSITIVE THOUGHTS AND  
CHALLENGES**





# LET'S THINK POSITIVE!!!



I'M NOT PERFECT... BUT WHO IS? WE'VE ALL GOT OUR STRENGTHS AND OUR WEAKNESSES.

WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES SOMETIMES, BUT WE CAN LEARN THROUGH THEM AND NOT LET THEM HAPPEN AGAIN.

THERE'S LOTS OF THINGS THAT I AM GOOD AT.

I'M NOT VERY SKILLFUL AT SOME OF THE THINGS THAT I DO BUT I CAN PRACTICE THEM AND GET BETTER.

I HAVE MY OWN IDEAS AND OPINIONS BUT I AM NOT VERY GOOD AT EXPRESSING THEM YET... I WILL GET BETTER.

LOTS OF PEOPLE CARE ABOUT ME AND WANT TO HELP ME.

I CAN MAKE CHOICES ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO ME.

I CAN MAKE SENSIBLE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE AND ACHIEVE WHAT I WANT IN LIFE.

EDUCATION HAS AN AWFUL LOT TO OFFER, BOTH AT SCHOOL AND AT COLLEGE... I CAN TAKE WHAT I LIKE FROM IT AND CHANGE MY LIFE FOR THE BETTER.

...come on then, let's get going... moving forward to a positive future where you are in control...





# LET'S RELAX!



Learning to relax is an extremely important and valuable thing to do. It doesn't come naturally to many of us and we need to practice the skills involved in order to become better at it.

Learning to relax stops us from:

- ✓ GETTING PHYSICALLY TENSE
- ✓ HAVING HEADACHES
- ✓ GETTING TIRED
- ✓ BECOMING ANXIOUS AND IRRITABLE
- ✓ HAVING SLEEPLESS NIGHTS
- ✓ GETTING INTO ARGUMENTS AND FIGHTS



## RULES FOR RELAXATION



DECIDE UPON A DAILY ROUTINE FOR YOUR RELAXATION PRACTICE,  
ie, WHEN AND WHERE

CHOOSE SOMEWHERE QUIET TO PRACTICE WHERE YOU WON'T  
BE DISTURBED

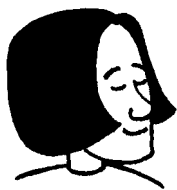
DON'T PRACTICE IF YOU ARE HUNGRY OR IF YOU HAVE JUST  
HAD A MEAL

BREATHE THROUGH YOUR NOSE, TAKING DEEP REGULAR BREATHS

TRY TO BE CONSCIOUS OF USING YOUR STOMACH MUSCLES TO  
BREATHE WITH

Turn now to the following pages for specific instructions...  
no falling asleep please !!





# LET'S RELAX THOSE MUSCLES !!



1. LIE DOWN OR SIT SO THAT YOU ARE FEELING REALLY COMFORTABLE.
2. CONCENTRATE ON THE FEELINGS IN YOUR MUSCLES AS WE TRY TENSING OR RELAXING THEM.
3. STARTING WITH YOUR **HANDS AND ARMS**, CLENCH YOUR FIST TIGHTLY AND TENSE THE MUSCLES IN YOUR ARMS. VERY SLOWLY RELAX THEM. REPEAT SEVERAL TIMES.
4. NOW THINK ABOUT YOUR **SHOULDERS**. HUNCH THEM UP TIGHTLY, NEARLY TOUCHING YOUR EARS. SLOWLY LET THEM RELAX. REPEAT A NUMBER OF TIMES.
5. KEEPING YOUR **EYES** CLOSED SCREW THEM UP TIGHTLY THEN GRADUALLY RELEASE YOUR EYELIDS UNTIL THEY ARE TOTALLY RELAXED. REPEAT.
6. TIGHTEN UP YOUR **EYEBROWS** BY DRAWING THEM TOGETHER THEN SLOWLY RELEASE THE TENSION IN YOUR FOREHEAD. REPEAT.
7. TENSE YOUR **JAW** BY BITING YOUR BACK TEETH TOGETHER TIGHTLY. THEN LET YOUR JAW GET HEAVIER AND HEAVIER UNTIL TOTALLY RELAXED. REPEAT.
8. TO RELAX YOUR **NECK** LET YOUR CHIN FALL FORWARD ONTO YOUR CHEST UNTIL THE MUSCLES IN YOUR NECK FEEL QUITE TIGHT. SLOWLY PULL IT BACK UNTIL YOU FEEL RELAXED. REPEAT.
9. PULL YOUR **STOMACH** IN AS TIGHTLY AS YOU CAN THEN GRADUALLY RELAX THOSE MUSCLES AND REPEAT.
10. USING YOUR HEELS PUSH DOWN HARD AGAINST THE FLOOR UNTIL YOU FEEL THE **TOPS OF YOUR LEGS** ARE AS TIGHT AS POSSIBLE. SLOWLY RELAX AND THEN REPEAT. FOR THE **BOTTOM HALF OF YOUR LEGS** POINT YOUR TOES AS HARD AS YOU CAN THEN SLOWLY RELEASE AND REPEAT.

GO THROUGH THE WHOLE SEQUENCE AGAIN.

# LEARNING TO BREATHE ...

Sounds a bit daft doesn't it?! We all know how to breathe, it's the first thing that we ever do and we never even have to think about it... could be serious if we were to stop!

Actually there are different ways to breathe and sometimes we have to consciously get our breathing under control. Think about times in the past when:

- ★ you've been frightened
- ★ somebody has been sleeping
- ★ you've been running
- ★ you've felt angry
- ★ you've been upset

There are noticeable variations in our breathing patterns at such times.

It is possible to get our breathing under control to decrease tension, to relax our muscles, to decrease our heart and pulse rate or even to increase our alertness by providing more oxygen to our brain. Try the following:

*Sit quietly but comfortably on a chair with your hands resting in your lap.*

*Keep your back straight but relaxed so that your lungs are able to operate efficiently.*

*Keep your head straight but relaxed with your eyes gently closed.*

*Take a deep, silent breath, through your nose. Feel the breath travelling deeply into your lungs... feel your chest expanding slowly.*

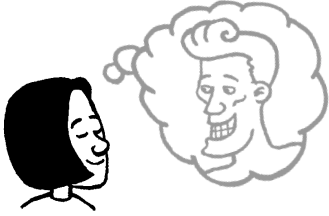
*Let the breath out through your mouth, slowly and calmly feeling your lungs empty.*

*Take another deep breath and feel what is happening to your chest as the air flows through your nose, down your windpipe and inflates your lungs.*

*Now breathe out again through your mouth, slowly and quietly.*

*Keep repeating the process at your own pace enjoying the feelings of peace and relaxation.*





# USING OUR IMAGINATIONS

As we have already said, one of the ways to help us relax when we're feeling tense and angry is to use our imagination to picture a pleasant, peaceful scene.

Here is an example of one to help get you started. It is much better however to draw your own imaginary scene, based perhaps on happy memories from your past... be creative, it's your own private world.

Begin by getting yourself relaxed, using the relaxation and breathing exercises that we have already tried. Let all other feelings go... breathe slowly and calmly... close your eyes...

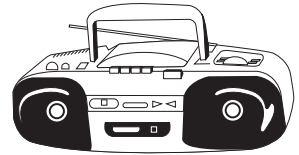
Listen as this is read to you .....

*We are going on a short but gentle journey. We are going into the woods... walking along a winding path through the softly waving trees. It is a beautiful, sunny, warm day with a few cotton wool clouds floating gently across a blue sky. The sun is warm on the skin of your arms and you can feel the breeze softly ruffling your hair. By the side of the path colourful, scented flowers grow in small groups. A young rabbit basks in the sunlight, cleaning his soft fur and nibbling on the lush green grass. You can feel the earth warm and firm under your feet.*

*The path ends at the banks of slowly babbling stream. You sit on a mossy tree trunk at the side of the stream, dipping your feet into the tumbling water which bubbles and sings around your ankles. The water is soft and cool upon your feet as the sun continues to warm your face and arms. The breeze blows a leaf from a nearby tree and you watch as it floats silently down coming to rest upon the surface of the water which carries it away downstream. You close your eyes and listen to the sounds of the water, the birds singing cheerfully in the trees and the leaves rustling gently in the late afternoon air. You can stay here for as long as you like, feet dipped in the stream... there are no pressures to leave... you are calm and happy... no worries... all is well...*



# RELAX IN OTHER WAYS?



There are no right or wrong ways to relax... over time we all develop our own strategies for winding down and making ourselves less tense.

Sometimes it might be



... spending time with our friends

... or being by ourselves

... reading a book

... or watching a good movie

... going for a walk

... or going on a spending spree

... playing computer games

... or drawing a picture



It's important to be aware of our own methods of relaxation.

Have a go at listing the things that you have found help to wind you down when you are feeling tense or angry:

## MY RELAXATION RECIPE

1

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2

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3

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4

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5

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