



# Relaxation exercise

**Before you start, find a calm place where you won't be disturbed. Sit in a comfortable chair that supports your head, or lie down on a bed or the floor. If you're sitting, place your arms on the chair arms and keep your feet flat on the floor – don't cross your legs. If you're lying down, rest your arms flat on the floor or bed with the palms up, then stretch out your legs, keeping them hip-width apart.**

*If you become aware of any sounds while you relax, try to ignore them and make them leave your mind as soon as they enter.*

- **Start by focusing on your breathing.** Slowly breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth in a regular rhythm – this will help to slow down your heart rate and calm your body.
- **Close your eyes.** Feel the chair, bed or floor supporting your whole body – your legs, your arms, your head. Take two slow and deep breaths through your nose, and let the tension begin to flow out of your body.
- **Become aware of your head, and notice how your forehead feels** – don't move on until it feels smooth and wide. Let any tension go from around your eyes, your mouth, your cheeks and your jaw. Let your teeth part slightly and feel the tension go.
- **Focus on your neck** – let the chair, bed or floor take the weight of your head and feel your neck relax until your head is feeling heavy and floppy. Gently lower your shoulders, making your shoulders wider and your neck longer.
- **Think about your arms and hands.** Let them sink into the chair, bed or floor until they feel heavy and limp.
- **Become aware of your back** – all the way from your neck down to your hips. Let your back sink down into the chair, bed or floor, then let your hips, legs and feet relax and roll outwards. Notice how your whole body is starting to relax.
- **Think about your breathing** – become aware of how your chest is gently rising and falling as you breathe. Let your next breath be a little deeper and a little slower.
- **Now that you're feeling completely relaxed and heavy, sit or lie still and concentrate on your slow, rhythmic breathing.**
- **When you're ready, slowly count down from five to one, and open your eyes.** Wiggle your fingers and toes, breathe deeply and stretch. Pause before gently rising.

*Source: [getselfhelp.co.uk](https://getselfhelp.co.uk)*

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