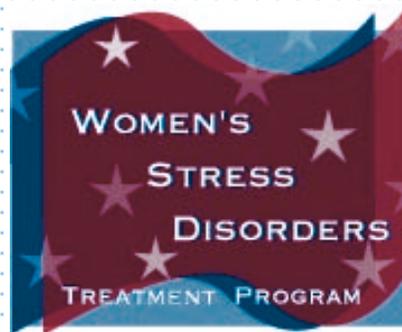


Relaxation Techniques

◆————◆
Deep Breathing • Progressive Relaxation
Guided Visualization • Meditation

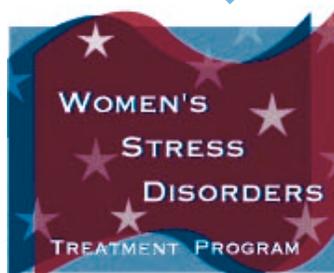


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Types of Relaxation

- ◆ Deep Breathing
- ◆ Progressive Relaxation
- ◆ Guided Visualization
- ◆ Meditation



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Deep Breathing

- ◆ Learning how to breath deeply, using your diaphragm muscle, is a very important part of learning to relax.
- ◆ Most people are “chest breathers.” This means that you are not using your full lung capacity when you breath.
- ◆ When you are feeling anxious, your breathing is shallow and rapid. In order to relax, you can change this to deep, slow breathing.

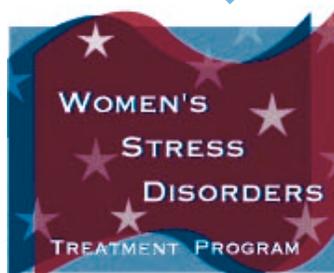


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How to Breath Deeply

- ◆ 1) Sit straight up in a chair or lie down on a bed or a carpeted floor
- ◆ 2) Place your hands on your belly, just below your ribs.
- ◆ 3) Take a slow, deep breath through your nose. As you inhale, expand your belly so that it pushes your hands.

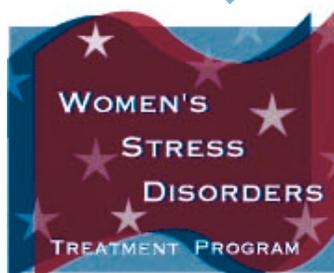


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How to Breath Deeply (cont.)

- ◆ 4) Open your mouth slightly and exhale a slow, steady stream of air.
- ◆ 5) Continue breathing deeply for a few minutes until you feel calmer.
- ◆ 6) Practice deep breathing for 5-10 minutes each day until you get the hang of it.
- ◆ 7) Use deep breathing when you are feeling anxious to calm yourself down.



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Tips for deep breathing

- ◆ Be sure that your shoulders do not raise up and your chest does not expand
- ◆ Do not hold your breath at any point during deep breathing. Slowly take the breath in and slowly exhale it out, but do not hold your breath.
- ◆ Focus all of your attention on your breathing. Close your eyes or pick one spot of the room where you will focus your eyes.

Note: Deep breathing is the same kind of breathing that you use when you sing or play a wind or brass instrument.

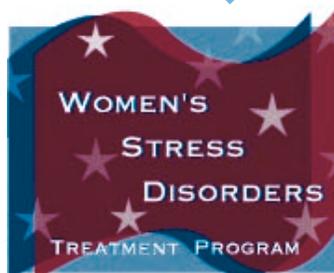


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Progressive Relaxation

- ◆ The idea behind progressive relaxation is that tensing and then releasing your muscles leads to a more relaxed physical state.
- ◆ You can get a cassette tape or CD that instructs you or you can make your own tape.
- ◆ The idea is to contract (tighten) each muscle group and then relax (let go). You can say “relax” to yourself as you do this.
- ◆ Be sure to take your time and hold each contraction for at least 5 seconds. Do each muscle twice in a row.

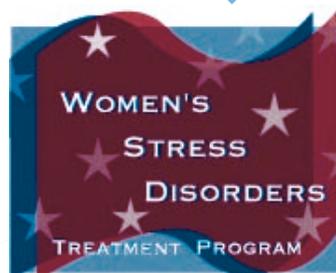


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How to do progressive muscle relaxation

- ◆ 1) Lie down on a bed or carpet or sit in a comfortable chair.
- ◆ 2) Focus on deep breathing for a few minutes before you get started.
- ◆ 3) Scrunch up your face and hold it for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 4) Open your mouth as wide as it will go and hold for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 5) Clench your jaw for 10 seconds and then relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 6) Raise your shoulders up as far as they can go and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.

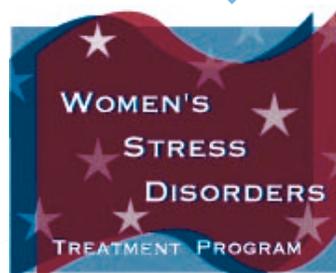


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How to do progressive muscle relaxation

- ◆ 7) Tighten your arms muscles and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 8) Make a tight fist with your hands and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 9) Tighten your chest muscles and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 10) Tighten your stomach muscles and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 11) Tighten your back muscles and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.



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How to do progressive muscle relaxation

- ◆ 12) Tighten your hips and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 13) Tighten your thighs and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 14) Tighten your calves and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 15) Scrunch up your toes and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.
- ◆ 16) Flex your toes and hold them for 10 seconds. Relax for 20 seconds. Repeat.



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Tips for progressive muscle relaxation

- ◆ The exercise should take approximately 15 minutes.
- ◆ You may want to make a tape, following the guide above. Make sure to pause to give yourself enough time to contract and then relax each muscle group.



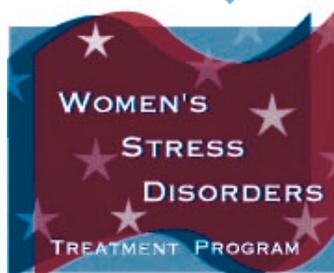
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Guided Visualization

The best way to do guided visualization is to listen to a cassette tape or CD recording.

These are typically a recording of a person's voice that guides you to picture (visualize) a very safe, peaceful place. You can find these at bookstores or alternative healing stores.



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Meditation

- ◆ Meditation can be quite simple. You can pick an image such as a peaceful waterfall or a field of flowers and focus on this image in your mind.
- ◆ Sit in a quiet, undistracted place so you can focus.
- ◆ Pay attention to your breathing and try to slow it down and keep it steady.
- ◆ Close your eyes or focus on one object in the room as you relax.



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Meditation (cont.)

- ◆ As distracting thoughts flow into your mind, let them flow out just as easily.
- ◆ Keep bringing your focus back to the meditation.
- ◆ You may want to try to meditate for 5 minutes at first, gradually adding 5 minutes on until you can meditate for 30 minutes, or even an hour.



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Summary

- ◆ Start with learning how to breath deeply. Once you can do this, try the other techniques.
- ◆ You may want to join a class or get some supplies to help you with your relaxation (e.g., a mindfulness meditation class, guided visualization tapes).



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