

Relaxation



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Relaxation is a useful skill for children dealing with depression, anxiety, alcohol/drug abuse and anger management issues. First the child learns what relaxation feels like and how relaxing it can make him or her feel. He or she learns what people or experiences in his or her world make them nervous or tense. The goal is for him or her to relax before a stressful situation happens. This allows him or her to avoid the expected tense feeling altogether.

How does this practice work?

- Option 1-Imagery. The child closes his or her eyes, takes deep breathes and thinks about a fun place. Next he or she pictures themselves in this fun place.
- Option 2-Muscle relaxation. This technique requires a quiet place and time of day. The child relaxes different muscle groups in a specific order.
- Option 3-"Secret calming" exercise. This exercise uses short periods of relaxation that teach a child to reduce his or her feeling of tension. Secret calming can be done any time and in any place. Deep breathing is the key to this relaxation. The child takes long deep breaths and thinks of something that makes him or her happy.
- Option 4-Meditation. Child closes his or her eyes, takes deep breathes and focuses on his or her breathing, saying to themselves, "breathe in, breathe out." This relaxation exercise could last 10 to 30 minutes.

Example:

Muscle relaxation Erin gets into a comfortable position, closes her eyes and starts to breathe deeply. Next Erin tenses and relaxes different muscle groups until the session ends with her feeling totally relaxed.

Secret calming exercise At any time or any place Mark can stop what he is doing for a moment, take very deep breaths and exhale slowly. While Mark is do deep breathing, he thinks of something that makes him happy.

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