

## Relaxation is good for your health

- ▶ Being able to relax is vital for good health
- ▶ Life can get busy and we don't notice how tense or stressed we have become.

### Are you relaxed? *Check now*

1 **SHOULDERS**  
Are they up round your ears or relaxed?  
Push them up and then let them fall down relaxed.

2 **FOREHEAD**  
Is it creased and frowning?  
Or smooth and relaxed?  
Push your eyebrows up then let them fall into a relaxed position.

3 **JAWS**  
Are your teeth clenched?  
Let them come apart without opening your mouth.  
Feel your jaw muscle.  
Is it hard or relaxed?  
Let it go.

4 **TONGUE**  
Is it up against your front top teeth?  
Let it lie on the floor of your mouth.



5 **HANDS**  
Are they clenched like fists ready for a fight or floppy and relaxed?

6 **BREATHING**  
Is it from your chest and rapid, or from your stomach and slow with full out breaths?

7 **TOES**  
Are they curled up tight or relaxed?

## Ways to relax

Some people relax by going for a walk or doing some gardening. Others relax by reading a book, listening to music, watching a movie or talking to friends.

### What helps you to relax?

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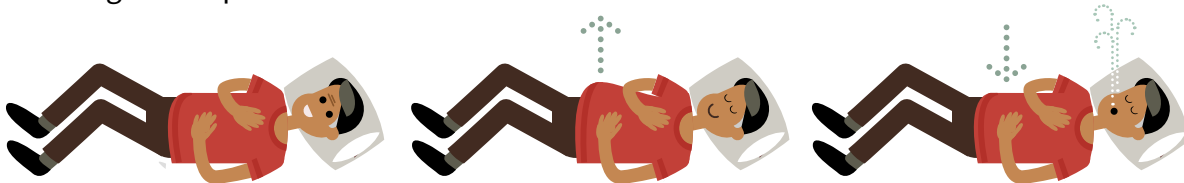
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## Deep breathing

- ▶ Deep breathing, or breathing into your stomach, can make you feel better and help you to relax.
- ▶ This is also called diaphragmatic breathing.

### Deep breathing technique



1

Lie on your back on a flat surface or in bed, with your knees bent and your head on a pillow.

You can also put a pillow under your knees to support your legs.

Place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your rib cage. This will allow you to feel your diaphragm move as you breathe.

2

Breathe in slowly through your nose so that your stomach moves out against your hand.

The hand on your chest should remain as still as possible.

3

Tighten your stomach muscles, letting them fall inward as you breathe out, through lips like you are going to whistle.

The hand on your upper chest must stay as still as possible.

At first, practise this exercise 5–10 minutes, about 3–4 times per day. Gradually increase the amount of time you spend doing this exercise, and perhaps even increase the effort of the exercise by placing a book on your abdomen.

*You may notice an increased effort will be needed to use the diaphragm correctly. At first, you'll probably get tired while doing this exercise but keep at it, because with continued practice, diaphragmatic breathing will become easy and automatic.*

