

Relaxation strategies, when practiced regularly, can reduce stress, decrease attention from unhelpful thoughts, increase the sense of relaxation in our body and help us stay calm.

Meditation

1. Use a noise free space. Wear comfortable clothing and sit or lie down.
2. Close your eyes while you take slow, deep breaths.
3. Concentrate on a word, thing, or relaxing thought.
4. Don't entertain other thoughts. Just relax and return to what you were focusing on.
5. Repeat and practice this exercise until you reach a level of desired relaxation.



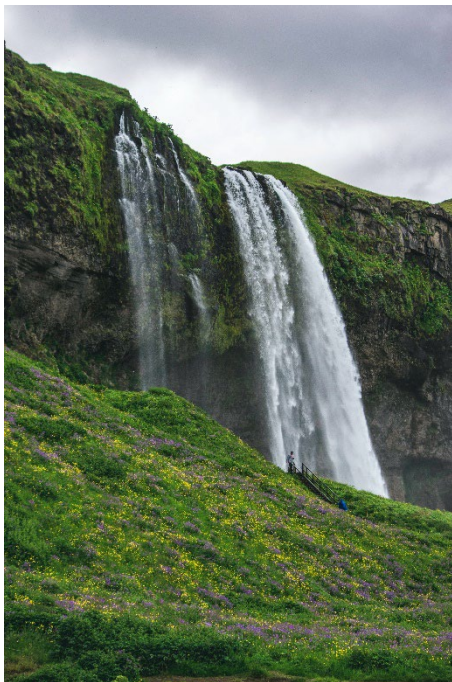
Deep-breathing exercises

1. Sit or lie on your back.
2. Take a breath slowly and hold it for a couple of seconds.
3. Slowly, release your breath and make sure to push all the air out.
4. Repeat.



Your local library or healthcare provider can provide more information on these and other relaxation techniques.

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Progressive muscle relaxation

1. Sit or lie down.
2. Start with your head or feet.
3. If you start with your head, tense the muscles of your face for 10 seconds. You may want to tense your forehead, nose, and mouth muscles separately. Then relax them for about 20 seconds.
4. Tense the muscles in your neck for 10 seconds. Then relax them for about 20 seconds. Pay attention to how each muscle group feels before and after tensing.
5. Move down your body and repeat the same steps: shoulders, chest, stomach, etc until you reach your feet.

Visualization or Imagery

1. Sit or lie down.
2. Imagine a nice place or location, somewhere serene, calm and relaxing like sitting near a waterfall. Imagine yourself in this place.
3. Focus on the scenery.
What do you see and hear?
What does it smell like?
Is it warm or fresh, are there other sensations you experience?
4. Continue until you feel refreshed or relaxed.