

SELF-RELAXATION EXERCISE

OVERVIEW

The following exercise is to be used in conjunction with our book, “*What Is PTSD? 3 Steps to Healing Trauma*” for best effect. Please visit www.WhatIsPTSD.com for additional resources.

GOAL

The *Self-Relaxation Exercise* focuses on using your internal dialogue related to the body to produce a state of very deep relaxation. While it is not hypnosis per se, you produce its effects as you master using your internal dialogue to calm and soothe your inner world. Your goal is a relaxed and restorative state. In this exercise, you are in control of this process the entire time. However, you will need to practice it more than once to get the best long-term outcome. Remember to inhale and exhale fully throughout the exercise in order to enhance your overall experience. Your ultimate goal is a relaxed and restorative state of calm and serenity.

TIME OUT

Always reflect on your inner state and notice if you need a break from the exercise to find your inner calm.

MATERIALS AND LAYOUT

Pen or pencil, timer, and the form we have provided on the following pages.

PATH TO COMPLETE

1. Find a relaxing place and position where you will not be disturbed.

WITH AUDIO: Close your eyes to enhance this exercise if using the audio recording, “*Recovery Now Trauma*” (Baranowsky, 2010). See our web store, www.WhatIsPTSD.com, to purchase recording.

WITHOUT AUDIO: Keep the book open to the Self-Relaxation Exercise page. Begin to focus and turn your attention to your breathing. Start to soften, lengthen, and deepen your breaths.

2. Let go of any tension and tightness you feel in your body. **WITHOUT AUDIO:** Read the first sentence, close your eyes and in your mind, repeat the phrase. Open your eyes and continue to take in each instruction until you have completed the statements below:

- *I am beginning to notice my breath*
- *I am beginning to make the inhalation and exhalation slow and deep*
- *As I inhale slowly and deeply I am beginning to feel calm and soft*
- *My mind is feeling calm and quiet*
- *I notice a sensation of relaxation*
- *My right hand feels soft and light*
- *My left hand feels soft and light*
- *My right arm feels soft and light*
- *My left arm feels soft and light*
- *I notice a feeling of release in my hands, arms, shoulders and neck*
- *My neck, jaw and forehead feel soft and light*
- *I notice a feeling of release in my neck, jaw and forehead*
- *My muscles feel comfortable and smooth*
- *My right foot feels soft and light*
- *My left foot feels soft and light*
- *My right calf feels soft and light*
- *My left calf feels soft and light*

- *I notice a feeling of release in my feet, calves, and thighs*
- *I feel completely supported by the surface I am resting on*
- *My body releases more and more*
- *My breathing is slow and deep*
- *I feel quiet and comfortable*
- *My mind is slow and calm*
- *My body releases more and more*
- *My heartbeat is slow and steady*
- *I can feel warmth flowing from my shoulders into my hands*
- *I can feel warmth flowing from my hips into my feet*
- *I feel deeply warm and at ease*
- *My mind is still and quiet*
- *My breathing is slower and deeper*
- *I feel safe and comfortable*
- *I feel at peace*
- *My breathing is slow and deep*

6. Slowly bring your attention back to the room in which you are relaxing.
7. Begin to make tiny movements in your fingers and toes, ankles and wrists, legs and arms.
8. Slowly stretch and bring your attention more fully back into the present time and place.

WITH AUDIO: If your eyes were closed while listening to the audio recording, open your eyes and bring your attention fully back to the present time and place.

Remember you can bring these feelings of relaxation into your regular waking day by using these focusing techniques. Repeat the exercise to teach your body to achieve a state of relaxation.

Also, remember to fully bring your awareness back to the present before attempting to use any machinery or perform any complicated tasks.