

Relaxation Response Instructions

- Sit in a comfortable place but try not to lie down. If you lie down on your bed, you may fall asleep. You may sit in a chair, on the floor with a cushion against the wall, or on the bed with a pillow behind you.
- It is much easier to elicit the Relaxation Response (RR) in the same place each day. Try reserving that place for your relaxation; you will find that you will start to relax simply by sitting there. Make sure that the phone is unplugged, the door is closed and your pets are absent (pets are strangely attracted to a relaxed person!).
- It is also easier to elicit the RR at the same time(s) each day. This helps make it a habit.
- If you are eliciting the RR on your own (i.e., not with a tape), do not set a timer. Sit opposite a clock and when you think that the time is up, open your eyes. If the time is not up, simply close your eyes and go back to what you were focusing on. If the time is up, slowly get up.
- It is quite normal for thoughts to come and go as you elicit the RR. Simply note that your mind has wandered, passively ignore the thoughts and go back to what you were focusing on.
- If you regularly exercise, try eliciting the RR immediately after you exercise; the sense of deep relaxation should come more easily.
- Try not to elicit the RR when you are very hungry or when you are full.
- We generally advise eliciting the RR twice a day for 20 minutes each session. If you simply cannot fit in a session, try focusing on your breath even for five minutes.
- The only “bad RR” is one not done.