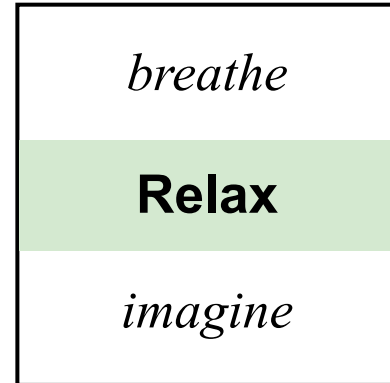


Relaxation Exercises

Many people with tinnitus say stress makes their tinnitus worse. Relaxation exercises can reduce stress. These exercises can slow down your breathing and reduce your heart rate. This workbook provides instructions for two relaxation exercises:

- 1 Deep Breathing
- 2 Imagery



Relaxation exercises

What is Deep Breathing?

- Focusing on your breathing to help you relax

What is Imagery?

- Imagining a calming and peaceful place

How can Deep Breathing and Imagery Help?

- By slowing down your body
- By helping you get your mind off of your tinnitus⁵
- By helping you feel relaxed and calm
 - Feeling relaxed and calm can help you:
 - Feel a sense of relief from tension and stress caused by tinnitus
 - Think more clearly and function better
 - Feel better overall

When can I use Deep Breathing and Imagery?

- Any time you feel stressed or tense

Prepare to begin Deep Breathing and Imagery

- 1 Find a relaxing place where you will not be disturbed. If needed, take the phone off the hook and ask others to give you this time alone. Loosen any tight clothing or change into comfortable clothes.

- 2 Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor or propped up. Place your hands in your lap or on the arms of the chair. Make sure you are comfortable.
- 3 Turn on a soothing sound. Avoid silence while you are practicing deep breathing or imagery. You might have a soothing sound on your Sound Plan (from Part 2 of this workbook) that you can use. If not, turn on music or other sound that helps you feel calm. If you prefer, you can use background sound while you are deep breathing.

Deep Breathing Instructions Step-by-Step

- 1 Prepare to begin by following steps 1-3 above
- 2 Place one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. Take a normal breath in and notice which hand moves the most. Most likely it will be the hand on your chest. This shows that you tend to breathe shallow breaths from your chest. Now try to take a breath from your abdomen (stomach). You might feel like you are pushing your stomach out - that is how it feels when you are more relaxed and breathing more deeply.



- 3 Close your eyes (if you are comfortable doing so) or look at an object in the room like a book on the bookshelf
- 4 Take a deep breath in through your nose - slowly for a count of three. (Remember to use your stomach first and let your chest expand naturally after that.)
- 5 Hold that breath for two seconds and then exhale for a count of three from your mouth
- 6 Repeat steps 4 and 5 at least five times
- 7 When you are ready to stop the Deep Breathing exercise, count back from 3 to 1:
 - 3 - Become aware of your surroundings
 - 2 - Move your feet, legs, hands, arms, and rotate your head
 - 1 - Open your eyes feeling relaxed

Imagery

Choose a Calming and Peaceful Place to Imagine

Before you begin, choose a place you will imagine. You can imagine any place that would be calming and peaceful for you. You should feel safe there.

When you are choosing what you will imagine, think about these things:

- **The place:** Where do you want to be?
Examples: the beach or in your kitchen
- **Sight:** What do you see?
Examples: trees, grass, the sun, or an oven
- **Smell:** What do you smell?
Examples: the ocean, pine, flowers, or cooking food
- **Sounds:** What do you hear?
Examples: birds, twigs cracking, soft waves, or boiling water
- **Touch:** What do you feel?
Examples: a cool breeze, the warm sun, or heat from cooking
- **Taste:** What can you taste?
Examples: salty air, sweet berries, cool water, or warm food

Imagery Instructions Step-by-Step

- 1 Prepare to begin by following steps 1 through 3 on page 38
- 2 Take several deep breaths and shift your focus to the peaceful image you chose.
- 3 As you focus your thoughts on your peaceful place:
 - Imagine a path you travel on as you journey through your place.
Example: As you look back notice your footprints in the sand where you have just walked along the shore. Slowly, a wave moves in and washes away the sand.
 - Imagine what you hear, smell, and taste.
 - Imagine reaching out and touching things around you.
Example: Notice how the sand or a leaf feels as you hold it in your hand.
 - As you imagine your relaxing place, move deeper and deeper into the image. You should feel calm and peaceful there.
 - Notice how your body feels - you will want to return to this feeling next time.
- 4 When you are ready to stop imagining the peaceful place, count back from 3 to 1:
 - 3 - Become aware of your surroundings
 - 2 - Move your feet, legs, hands, arms, and rotate your head
 - 1 - Open your eyes feeling relaxed



Practice Video: Deep Breathing and Imagery

There is a video on the DVD that came with this workbook (“Managing Your Tinnitus, Deep Breathing Exercise”). It shows a man using deep breathing to relax. Later, he uses imagery to relax when his tinnitus is bothering him at work. You can watch the video to learn deep breathing and imagery. Try to watch the video at least once. You can keep using the video while you practice, or you can begin doing the exercises on your own. If you do not have a DVD player, you can use the instructions in this workbook instead - or go to your public library to view the video.



Relief Scale

The Relief Scale is shown below. Use it to rate how much relief from stress or tension you feel after using deep breathing or imagery. *No relief* means that there is no change in the stress or tension caused by your tinnitus. *Complete relief* means that the stress or tension caused by the tinnitus is completely gone. Learning to relax using deep breathing and imagery takes time and practice. You can use the Relief Scale to track your progress.

Instructions

- Get into a comfortable position
- Follow the instructions for deep breathing (p. 39) or imagery (p. 41)
- Fill out the chart below to track your progress



0

No relief



1

Slight relief



2

Mild relief



3

Moderate relief



4

Nearly complete relief



5

Complete relief

Date	Time of Day	Minutes Practiced		Relief
		Deep Breathing	Imagery	
Example: <i>June 5, 2009</i>	<i>10:00am</i>	<i>5 mins</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>June 5, 2009</i>	<i>10:05am</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>5 mins</i>	<i>4</i>