

This leaflet explains about how relaxation techniques can help you cope with chronic fatigue syndrome. If you have any questions, please call us. Our telephone number is 020 7813 8541.



Chronic fatigue syndrome and relaxation

Information for young people

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust

How relaxation helps

It can sometimes help when you are having trouble getting to sleep or winding down to complete a simple routine. It can take a bit of time to learn the techniques and for them to start to work, but keep practising and they become easier.

Getting ready to relax

- Keep your surroundings as quiet as possible and make sure you are unlikely to be disturbed for around 20 minutes.
- Have a warm shower or bath before you start, especially if you are trying relaxation to get off to sleep.
- Make sure you are wearing loose, comfortable clothing and nothing is restricting your movement.
- Turn off the lights and lie down.

If you find it hard to go somewhere quiet, play some quiet music. Make sure it is relaxing music, with a slow steady beat. Perhaps try to listen to some classical music even if that is not usually your type of music.

Breathing

- Once you are lying down, close your eyes.
- Start by taking slow breaths in and out. Keep your breathing middle-sized, not too deep and not too shallow.
- Start to feel how your body moves when you breathe in and relaxes when you breathe out.
- With every breath, concentrate on how your body is moving and start to relax.

Releasing tension

- Once you are focused only on your breathing, start to squeeze your toes and feet really tight.
- As you breathe out, release them and imagine that they are light and relaxed.
- Repeat this three times and then do the same with your lower legs.
- Keep moving up your body, squeezing and relaxing each section: your thighs, shoulders, face, arms and hands.
- Remember that the order is not important, only that you concentrate on feeling the tension and releasing it.

Imagination techniques

Some people find it easier to use their imagination to help them relax. Try these ideas to see whether they suit you.

Peaceful place

- Think of a peaceful place – some people think of the beach or maybe up a mountain.
- Concentrate on walking along a path through your peaceful place, feeling the sun and breeze on your face.
- With each step you take, you feel more relaxed.
- Imagine that you see a cottage in the distance and walk up to it.
- Inside it is decorated just as you would want and has lots of comfortable chairs.
- Imagine you are sitting in one of the chairs, just enjoying the calm and peacefulness.

The feather

- Imagine you are a feather high up in the sky.
- You become more relaxed as you float down to earth, slowly on the breeze.
- As you float to the ground, you rest down gently, feeling yourself completely relaxed.

The clock

- Imagine a clock with only one hand.
- At 12 o'clock, you have the most stress and tension possible.
- At 6 o'clock, you are completely relaxed and calm.
- Imagine where you are now.
- As you breathe in and out, imagine the clock hand dropping down to 6 o'clock, until you are feeling completely relaxed.

Practice makes perfect

Keep trying these suggestions. It can take a bit of time to learn them, but they will become easier.

If you have any questions,
please ring the CFS/ME team on 020 7813 8541.



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