Expanding and Contracting

Time: 4 minutes

*This short relaxation exercise, performed while lying down, combines progressive relaxation with breathing and body scanning techniques.*

**Script**

Lie down on the floor and close your eyes. Turn your attention inward and become aware of your body.

All at once, stretch out and tense your arms and legs, open your eyes up wide, spread out your fingers and toes, stretch out your tongue, and raise your body a few inches from the floor. Hold...Now let go. Relax.

Take in a full, deep breath with the nose and fill up the lower part of your lungs so that your abdomen raises up...Open your mouth and let the air rush out.

Take in another full, deep breath with the nose and fill up the mid and upper portion of your lungs. Feel your rib cage expanding...Open your mouth and let the air rush out.

Let your breath return to normal, breathing with your nose, in and out...Each time you breathe out, you're relaxing more and more.

You can relax even more by letting your mind scan your body, giving yourself the mental permission to relax even more.

More and more, your feet are relaxing...your calves are relaxing...your knees are relaxing...your thighs and your fanny are relaxing...your lower back...mid-back...upper back, and shoulders are all relaxing, more and more.

Allow your upper arms...your elbows...your forearms...your hands, and your fingers to relax. All are relaxed. Feel your torso and the organs in your abdomen relaxing completely...And now your chest.

Feel your neck relax and all the muscles in your face relax. Your mouth...cheeks...nose...eyes, and forehead are relaxed. The feeling of relaxation spreads from the top of your head and all the way down to your toes. Feel yourself become more and more relaxed.

**Pause**

*At this time scan the participants and make sure they are relaxed. Look for hunched shoulders, stiff necks, toes pointing up, hands made into fists. If the majority of the group seems to need more time, repeat the exercise from the first stretch to the pause. Observe your group again, are they getting the gist of it more now?*

*Following completion of the second run through of the exercise above your group should be ready to go on to guided imagery. Let the two exercises flow seamlessly into one another.*