

## Common Types of Relaxation Techniques

Relaxation Technique Name	Description
Diaphragmatic Breathing	Take in slow, deep breaths through the nose. Pause, then breathe out through the mouth. Exhalation takes twice as long as inhalation to expel as much air as possible. Do 5 breaths sets. Learn to isolate the diaphragm by placing one hand on the abdomen – and the other on the chest. Practice moving until only the hand on abdomen moves.
Progressive Muscle Relaxation	Actively tense and relax various muscle groups to discriminate feelings of tension from those of relaxation. After tensing and relaxing all major muscle groups from head to toe, (or toe to head) focus on making muscle groups increasingly relaxed.
Autogenic (modified progressive) relaxation	Similar to progressive muscle relaxation, without actively tensing muscle groups. Instead focus on creating a desired state (warm, heavy, relaxed muscles) in successive muscle groups. Then focus on areas where tension remains.
Mindful Meditation	A body-scan technique similar to autogenic relaxation. Focus on all sensations felt in each body part with a nonjudgmental, accepting attitude. For example: areas of soreness, burning, or throbbing are mentally identified and accepted “as-is” while letting go of any related sadness or anger and learning to better understand and control the sensation.
Transcendental Meditation (TM) Relaxation Response (RR)	Repeat a mantra (in TM) or alternative mental focus (in RR) (word, phrase, sound or prayer), while letting go of other thoughts that distract from that focus (passive attitude). This repetition continues for at least 20 minutes.
Pleasant Imagery	After a body-scan technique similar to autogenic (above), generate mental images of a place deemed comfortable, safe or special. Images include pleasant sights, sounds and smells associated with that desirable real or imaginary place.
Guided Imagery	Working with a therapist, the patient forms an image representing the pain or its cause. Patient’s then use their imagination to attack the cause or improve comfort. This is done by using images that represent normal processes such as releasing endorphins or mobilizing immune cells.
Hypnosis	A state of deep relaxation and altered consciousness that produces a heightened receptiveness to suggestion. Typical steps include deep relaxation, attention fixation, suggestion of desired change (immediate and delayed), and restoration of fully conscious, aware state.