

Positive Emotions-Meditation and Relaxation Exercises

Meditation exercises

Meditation is a highly focused kind of attention. There are a range of websites and resource that have developed meditative activities that you can use with your classes as a way of starting lessons. These are calming, focusing exercises that can last as little as 30 seconds but allow students to gather themselves and focus their attention before the task at hand.

The easiest way to get started with meditation and relaxation is to use pre-recorded meditation tracks. A range of guided meditations can be downloaded from the Meditation Society of Australia's website ([insert link-
<http://download.meditation.org.au/guidedmeditations.asp>](http://download.meditation.org.au/guidedmeditations.asp)).

Relaxation exercises

Progressive Body Relaxation leads to deep relaxation of both the body and the mind. It is said that 15 minutes of this relaxation may rejuvenate you more than hours of sleep! So if you are feeling rundown and tired and you still have things to complete, practice this relaxation and you will find that it rejuvenates the body and gives you clarity and peace of mind. And of course it is a wonderful way to drift off into a deep and peaceful sleep.

Lie down comfortably on your back, support your head with a cushion if you need to and if your back is uncomfortable place a pillow under your knees. Keep your body warm by covering it with a towel or blanket. Let your arms roll away from your body and separate your legs slightly, letting your feet fall outward.

Become aware of your breath and allow it to slow and deepen. If your mind becomes distracted just draw it back naturally to your breathing. You will be placing your attention on a certain part of your body and relaxing it by feeling it expand on the inward breath and relax on the outward breath. Relax your body by spending one breath in each of the following areas:

Toes, heels, feet, ankles, calves, knees, thighs, hips, lower back, middle back, upper back, shoulders, upper arms, lower arms, wrists, hands and palms, neck and throat, face, lips, cheeks, eyebrows, forehead, temples.

An alternate order for relaxation is:

Left hand, wrist and forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder

Right hand, wrist and forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder

Back of the neck, spine, back

Left hip, thigh, knee, ankle, sole of foot

Right hip, thigh, knee, ankle, sole of foot

Abdomen and stomach, ribs and chest, throat

Scalp, forehead, temples, cheeks, jaw, mouth, nose, ears, eyes, whole face.

After relaxing each body part bring your attention back onto your breath and feel your whole body expanding on the inward breath and relaxing on the outward breath. Experience the body as a whole sinking down into the floor, letting go and releasing all the tension. In this completely relaxed state the body and the mind are at rest.

To come out of the relaxation begin to move your fingers, toes, hands and feet. Have a stretch and bring your hands up to touch your face. When you are ready to sit up roll to your side and slowly help yourself up. Take a breath in and feel the rejuvenating effects of the deep relaxation.

Acknowledgements

Australian School of Meditation