

Relax & Renew: A guided music therapy experience

For best results, please use this instruction sheet with the podcast.

Relax & Renew is designed to help you learn to quiet and renew your mind and relax your body. This session may help relieve your stress or anxiety, improve your sleep experience and relieve physical pain.

Some helpful tips and reminders are:

- Feel free to stop or modify any of the suggestions to make your body more comfortable
- Begin by getting comfortable seated in a chair or by sitting, supported on the floor
- Adjust the light in the room for your own comfort
- Remove glasses, jewelry or shoes if they are a distraction

Step #1 - Diaphragmatic (deep) breathing

- Bring your thoughts toward your body, to your natural breathing rhythm. Focus on the rise and fall of your stomach.
- Allow the music to take you into a state of calm and relaxation.
- Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of seven seconds, hold the breath for a count of seven, then exhale through your mouth (as if blowing out a candle) for a count of seven.
- Breathe normally for 30 seconds. Repeat.

Step #2 - Progressive muscle relaxation (combine with diaphragmatic breathing)

- Point your toes and flex them toward the ceiling as you inhale to a count of seven. Hold muscles and breath for count of seven. Release muscles and exhale to count of seven. Repeat.
- Repeat the exercise, tightening and releasing the calf muscles and knees with the breathing cycle.
- Repeat the exercise with your thigh muscles.
- Repeat the exercise with your buttock muscles.
- Repeat the exercise with your hands, pressing your palms into the floor or your thighs.
- Repeat the exercise with your elbows, pressing them into the floor or the arms of your chair.
- Repeat the exercise with your shoulders, raising them up toward your earlobes.
- Repeat the exercise with your face, raising your eyebrows toward your forehead as if surprised.
- Throughout this exercise, observe where you might be holding tension. Observe changes in your body. If you hear noises, let them serve as a signal to relax more deeply.

Step #3 - Guided imagery and mindfulness

- Close your eyes and create a safe place in your mind. It may be a place you've visited or one you create in your mind that gives you comfort.
- Picture what you see, including colors. If people are in your safe place, notice who they are.
- Notice the sounds. If outside, it might be the wind. If inside, it might be the sounds of your home.
- Notice the smells, tastes and feelings on your skin.
- Enjoy the feeling your safe place creates and allow that feeling to flow through your body.
- Notice any physical or emotional sensations and where they are located. If you have any areas of discomfort, allow your attention to move there and acknowledge those feelings.
- Loosen any resistance to discomfort, as if you are opening your fist very slowly.
- Let go of all tension and allow any uncomfortable feelings to melt and dissolve.
- Count backwards from five slowly, focusing on the relaxation you feel in mind and body.
- Open your eyes and return your focus to the room where you are sitting.
- Give yourself gratitude for the time you have spent nurturing your body and mind.

