

RELAXATION TRAINING

WHAT IS RELAXATION TRAINING?

Relaxation Training involves teaching effective skills for relaxing both the mind and body for sleep. These skills usually include deep breathing, muscle relaxation exercises, and imagining calming and peaceful scenes. Relaxation Training is one part of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia treatment sometimes provided separately for those with more mild sleep problems.

WHAT WILL I DO IN RELAXATION TRAINING?

Your therapist will help you to learn and practice specific techniques that can help you relax, reduce stress and tension, and fall asleep. Examples of these techniques are:

- **Abdominal Breathing:** Learning to breathe from your belly, which results in deeper breathing than breathing from your chest. This type of breathing helps to trigger the body's relaxation response.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Tensing and then relaxing different muscle groups of the body to loosen the muscle groups and promote an overall sense of calm
- **Guided Imagery:** Imagining calming and peaceful scenes that are described in detail while breathing calmly

After you learn relaxation techniques in session, you will try them out in your life and discuss how this is working with your therapist.

HOW LONG DOES RELAXATION TRAINING TAKE?

Relaxation Training can be taught in 1-2 sessions; although, it is usually best to return for one or more sessions to practice and receive feedback from your therapist.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF RELAXATION TRAINING?

There are few risks associated with Relaxation Training. For older adults or others with arthritis or similar joint or muscular conditions, the progressive muscle relaxation exercise (tensing and relaxing of muscle groups) is not recommended. Instead, this can be done by imagining the tensing and relaxing of specific muscle groups.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS RELAXATION TRAINING?

Relaxation Training is effective in promoting a state of relaxation. As a treatment for sleep, it is not as effective as full CBT for Insomnia treatment, though it can provide helpful skills for those with more mild sleep problems.