



RELAX AND LOWER YOUR STRESS BEFORE SURGERY OR PROCEDURES

It is common to be anxious before surgery or procedures. Simple stress relieving exercises can help people feel calm. When you are relaxed your body is stronger and you can heal better.

Here are a few simple ways to relax before you come to the hospital. Take time to relax several times a day before surgery or procedure.

- Sit in a quiet space and take slow deep breaths. Think of a peaceful place. Relax your muscles. Try these 5 to 10 minutes, several times a day.
- Sit in a quiet place and listen to music that you enjoy. Relax your muscles as you listen. Repeat several times a day.
- Take a walk. Do simple stretching exercises 5-10 minutes several times a day.
- Relax in a warm bath or shower.
- Think positive thoughts. Think about the good things in your life.

OTHER IDEAS

- Listen to relaxation CD or tape several times per day. Bring the tape to the hospital.
- Ask someone to gently massage tense muscles.
- Ask questions. Talk with your family and friends. Get extra help if needed.

Please let us know how we can help.

How would you rate your stress level now?

STRESS SCALE

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10
 [No Stress] [Mild/Small] [Moderate/Medium] [Severe/Large]

SIMPLE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

The Relaxation Response is a simple practice that once learned takes 10 to 15 minutes a day and can relieve stress and tension. Herbert Benson, M.D. at Harvard Medical School, developed the technique.

1. Pick a short word or phrase such as "one", "peace".
2. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Relax your muscles, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face.
5. Breathe slowly and as you do, say the word, silently, as you exhale.
6. Do not worry about how well you are doing. When other thoughts come into your mind, gently return to your repetition.
7. Continue for 10 to 15 minutes. You may open your eyes to check the time.
8. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes, allowing other thoughts to return. Then open your eyes and sit for another minute before rising.
9. Practice the technique once or twice daily.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

The basic idea is to systematically train tensing and relaxing groups of muscles. It is a technique that can be easily learned and requires only 10-20 minutes per day. You may practice this technique seated or lying down in a completely quiet place free from all distractions.

1. Gently squeeze your hands into fists. Take a few moments to really feel that tension.
2. Then, after a few seconds, let go of all the tension in your hand completely.
3. Pause for a moment and notice the difference between the state of tension and the state of relaxation. Feeling this difference is the basis of this progressive relaxation technique.
4. Tense your toes and hands together. Gently curl your toes and clench your hands into fists. Hold on to tension for a few seconds. And let go, releasing that tension completely.
5. Repeat again, this time tensing your upper and lower legs along with your toes and hands. Feel the tension for a moment, and let go, releasing the tension completely.
6. This technique is very effective in helping you release stored tension in your body quickly.