



**James Paget
University Hospitals**
NHS Foundation Trust

Relaxation Strategies



Patient Information

These techniques can help you relax both mentally and physically. Some people take a walk, do Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, music therapy, clinical aromatherapy, hydrotherapy, painting etc., others prefer specific techniques.

Try any of these techniques in the leaflet and find one that helps you.

1. Box breathing

Sit comfortably and visualise four sides of a box.

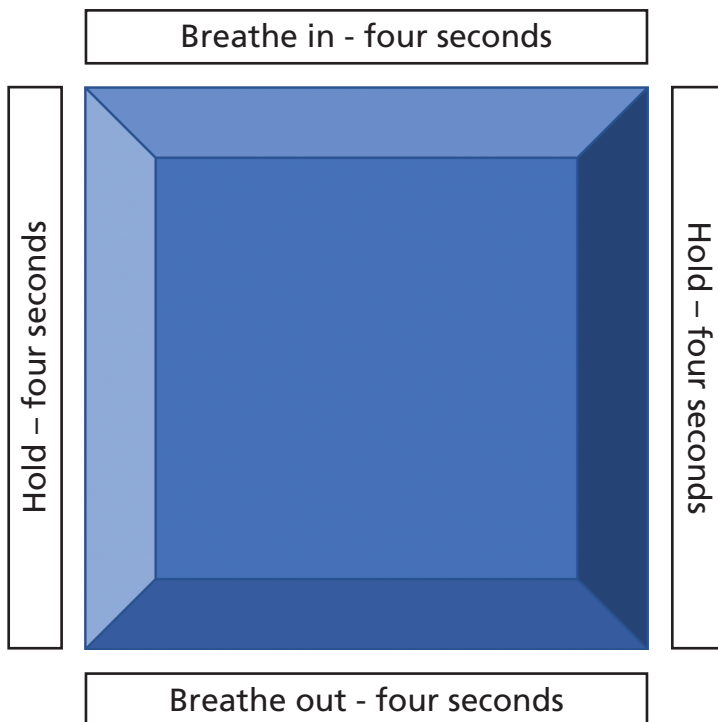
Step one: Breathe in through your nose for four seconds.

Step two: Hold in your breath for four seconds.

Step three: Breathe out for four seconds.

Step four: Hold out your breath for four seconds.

Repeat: Four rounds.



2. Guided imagery

Step one: Sit or lie down comfortably, in a place with minimal distractions.

Step two: Imagine a peaceful place, either a memory of a real place or a scene you have crafted in your mind. Visualise it clearly and use these prompts to bring it to life through your five senses.

1. What do you see?
2. What do you hear?
3. What do you smell?
4. What do you taste?
5. What do you feel?

Step three: Maintain the visualisation as long as possible, concentrating on slow, deep breaths throughout the exercise. Focus on the sense of calm that comes from being in a relaxing environment.



3. Progressive muscle relaxation

It is important to avoid straining or excessively tensing any muscles - a minimum level of tension is sufficient. If any of the exercises cause discomfort or cramping, ease up, stop or skip that specific area of the body.

Step one: Sit or lie down comfortably, preferably in a space with minimal distractions.

Hold each of the following positions for five seconds, then slowly release for 10 seconds.

Action:

- ***Fists:*** Clench both fists. Release
- ***Biceps:*** Bend both elbows, tensing biceps. Release
- ***Triceps:*** Straighten both arms, tensing muscles in the back of the arms. Release
- ***Forehead:*** Wrinkle forehead in a frown. Release
- ***Eyes:*** Close eyes tightly. Open

- **Jaw:** Gently clench jaw. Release
- **Tongue:** Press against roof of mouth. Release
- **Lips:** Press together. Release
- **Neck:** Gently tilt neck back. Return. Bring head forward to chest. Return
- **Shoulders:** Shrug shoulders. Release
- **Lower back:** Gently arch your back. Release
- **Buttocks:** Squeeze buttocks. Release
- **Thighs:** Straighten one knee. Release. Repeat other leg
- **Calves:** Lift your heels from the floor. Release
- **Shins and ankles:** Keeping heels on floor, lift toes and forefoot. Release

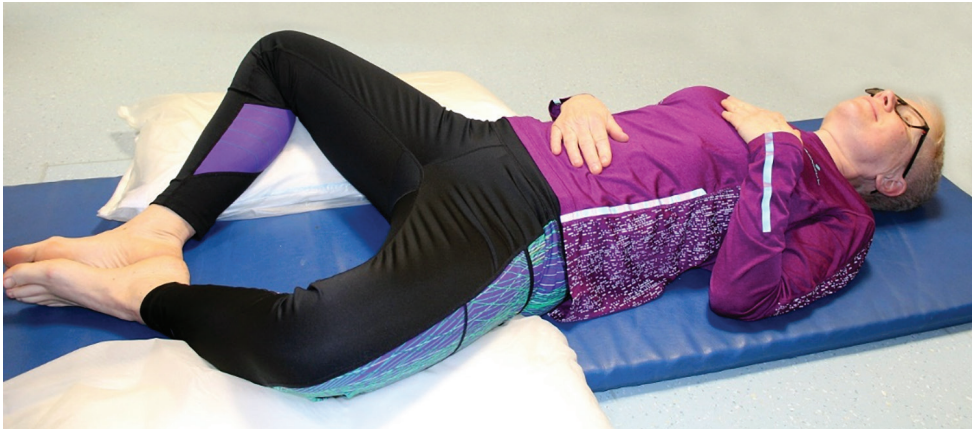
4. Deep breathing

Starting position: Sitting/lying.

Action:

Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen. Take a deep breath in through your nose, then breathe out gently through your mouth.

Take a moment to relax and focus on your breathing. Pay attention to your breath as you inhale and exhale. You may be able to feel the movement in your chest, abdomen and pelvic floor muscles.



Your Feedback We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible - talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve it, then ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care.

OUR VALUES

Proud of the Paget

Collaboration

We work positively with others to achieve shared aims

Accountability

We act with professionalism and integrity, delivering what we commit to, embedding learning when things do not go to plan

Respect

We are anti-discriminatory, treating people fairly and creating a sense of belonging and pride

Empowerment

We speak out when things don't feel right, we are innovative and make changes to support continuous improvement

Support

We are compassionate, listen attentively and are kind to ourselves and each other

Before leaving please complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.

Help us transform NHS services and to support patient choice.



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240

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