

Relaxation Techniques for Anxiety



What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of worry or nervousness. It may happen before a test or a big event, or even in the hospital. It can happen when there is danger, or you feel there may be danger. Often times, relaxation techniques can help relieve anxiety.

What is controlled breathing?

Controlled breathing is an exercise. It can help a person to feel calm and relaxed. These skills can be practiced and used when you feel anxious or nervous.

Note: You should not feel dizzy. If holding your breath ever feels uncomfortable, stop. Start back up and hold your breath for just a few seconds, at most. Only do these techniques where you can safely perform them.

Name	How it's done
Equal Breathing	<p>Breathe through your nose and out through your mouth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Breathe in for a count of 4 seconds. – Breathe out for a count of 4 seconds. – Once you are comfortable with this breathing, you can increase to 6 or 8 seconds with each breath.
Belly Breathing	<p>Put one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The goal is to use your belly to breathe, not your chest. – The hand on your belly should move more than the hand on your chest when you breathe. – Take a big breath in through your nose. – Work towards 6 to 10 big, slow breaths per minute for 10 minutes. 
Alternate Nostril Breathing	<p>Start in a comfortable position.</p> <p>Side one:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hold your right thumb over your right nostril. Breathe in deeply through the left nostril. – After breathing in fully, put your left thumb over your left nostril. Remove your right thumb and exhale through your right nostril. <p>Side two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hold your left thumb over your left nostril. Breathe in deeply through the right nostril. – After breathing in fully, put your right thumb over your right nostril. Remove your left thumb and exhale through your left nostril. 

Name	How it's done
Progressive Relaxation	To relieve tension, close your eyes. <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Try to tense each group of muscles for 5 seconds and relax each group of muscles for 15 seconds.– Start with the group of muscles in the feet and toes. Move up to the knees, thighs, rear, chest, arms, hands, neck, jaw and eyes.– Be sure to take deep, slow breaths while doing this.
Guided Imagery	Use a coach, therapist or helpful recording as your guide. <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Breathe deeply.– Focus on pleasant, positive thoughts.– Try to use all of your senses (sight, hear, smell, taste, feel).– Ask your provider for resources, to assist with this technique.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any concerns or if your child has special health care needs not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.