

# Relaxation Techniques

## **Abdominal breathing**

Lie down or get yourself into a comfortable and relaxed position. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes. Pay attention to your breathing, and place your hand on your abdomen where it seems to rise and fall as you breathe. Notice how your abdomen rises each time you inhale and falls each time you exhale. Now pay attention to your chest. Is it moving in sync with your abdomen, or is it staying rather rigid? Try to breathe so that your chest is following the same movements as your abdomen. Continue to take deep breaths.

## **Deep breathing**

This works well as a continuation to abdominal breathing. As you are noticing that your abdomen rises when you inhale and falls when you exhale, begin to inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Make sure that you are taking long, slow deep breaths that slightly raise and lower your abdomen. Continue breathing deeply as you inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth.

## **Breath counting**

This also works well as a continuation to abdominal breathing and deep breathing. Breathe in deeply into your abdomen, counting one, two, three, four as you inhale. As you exhale, count one, two, three, four. Continue counting your inhalations and exhalations, noticing how your breathing will slow and you will gradually feel more relaxed;

## **Progressive muscle relaxation**

Get into a comfortable position in a quiet room where you won't be disturbed. You may want to remove your shoes. Begin to relax as you take a few slow, deep breaths. While the rest of your body is relaxed, begin to clench and tighten each part of your body, and then let that tension go. Clench and tighten from head to toe, including your scalp, face, jaw, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, chest, stomach, lower back, buttocks, thighs, knees, shins, calves, ankles, feet, and toes, slowly tightening and then letting go. Feel the comfortable warmth and heaviness of deep relaxation through your entire body as you continue to breathe slowly and deeply. Your entire body will become comfortably loose and relaxed, calm and rested.

## **Visualization**

This technique is designed to create a special place where you can retreat for relaxation and guidance. It can be any place you wish, indoors or outdoors, as long as it has a private entry and is peaceful, comfortable, and safe. To go to your safe place, relax and be totally comfortable. Close your eyes. Walk slowly to a quiet place in your mind. Imagine what you see, how it smells, the things around you and how they feel, what you hear, how the ground feels beneath you. Memorize this place, smells, tastes, sights, sounds. You can come back and relax here whenever you want.