

## Leaflet 9: Relaxation and mindfulness scripts

### Breathlessness Intervention Service

The information given below is designed to help you manage your stable long-term breathlessness. If your breathing is getting worse, or you are experiencing breathlessness as a new feeling, it is important to seek medical advice from your GP.

### Relaxation exercises

There are several different types of relaxation. You may like some better than others; try some and see which you prefer. You can read the relaxation to yourself first and then practice it, or perhaps get someone to read them to you until you become familiar with them. Some relaxation scripts are detailed below. Your friends or family may know of others which you might like to try.

If you have not used relaxation before, please read [Leaflet 6: Relaxation and mindfulness](#)

Link: <https://www.cuh.nhs.uk/patient-information/leaflet-6-relaxation-and-mindfulness/> before using these scripts.

### Visualisation

**Visualising a place:** Visualising a relaxing scene can often help us feel more relaxed. It could be your favourite place, a walk that you know, a garden, or the beach. It could also be somewhere from your imagination. When you imagine this place, think of all the things that you can see, hear, smell, touch and perhaps even taste. If you visualise a place, always choose somewhere that makes you feel happy and secure, and where you feel happy or calm.

**Relaxation using colour:** Sometimes, visualising colours, and images associated with these colours can also be relaxing.

Below are some examples of visualisation relaxations that you might like to try.

## Cottage by the sea

First, make yourself completely comfortable. Take yourself in your imagination to the garden of a cottage by the sea. You are sitting in a comfortable garden chair with plump cushions. All around you are the flowers of the cottage garden, and you have a wonderful view out to the sea. In the distance you hear the rhythmic beating of the waves on the beach below.

After a while, you get up from your chair and walk across the brilliant, sun-warmed grass of the lawn. You make your way down a flight of steps leading directly onto the wide, smooth, sandy beach. You take off your shoes and walk over the pale, warm, dry sand down towards the water's edge. Feel the warmth coming from the sand beneath your feet and feel the sand between your toes.

As you get nearer to the sea, the sand becomes smooth, hard and damp. Now you come to the water's edge. You watch the sparkling foam running up the beach towards you, and you let the warm, shallow water flow around your ankles. You walk along the water's edge, enjoying the rhythmic swish of the waves swirling around your ankles, the sunlight dancing on the water.

Now you turn back towards the cottage. You walk over the smooth, hard sand and over the pale, powdery sand. You go up the steps leading back onto the lawn. The grass feels cool and refreshing to your warm, bare, sandy feet. You sit down in your chair again, allow your eyes to close and bask in the warmth of the late afternoon sun.

Enjoy this scene for a few minutes. Then begin to bring your attention back to the room in which you are in. Become aware of the feeling of relaxation that you are bringing back with you. And, in your own time, open your eyes.

## Tranquillity exercise

- Think about the word **tranquillity**.
- Say the word **tranquillity** three times in your mind.
- Think about a colour that you associate with **tranquillity**.
- Imagine all the things that this colour reminds you of.
- Now imagine yourself in a place that brings a feeling of **tranquillity**.
- What can you see in this place? What can you hear? Or smell? Or touch?
- Enjoy this feeling of **tranquillity**.

Adapted from Ref: Thew, M, (2008) 'Portable' Relaxation for Everyday Living' In Thew M & McKenna J (Eds) (2008) Lifestyle Management in Health and Social Care. Oxford: Wiley Publishing.

## **Mindfulness: Letting go of thoughts**

- Spend a few moments to allow your breath to slow down to a gentle, easy rhythm.
- Close your eyes and imagine that you are sitting on the bank of a gently flowing river, feeling comfortable and relaxed, and able to breathe freely.
- As you watch the stream, you see some leaves drifting by on the surface of the water.
- As each thought or feeling comes into your mind, gently place it on a leaf, and allow it to drift by, and disappear.
- Place each thought or feeling onto a leaf and allow it to drift by, whether it is a happy or sad, comfortable or uncomfortable thought or feeling, just place it on a leaf and allow it to drift on.
- Just observe it and then let it go.
- If there are no thoughts or feelings, just watch the river as it gently flows.
- When thoughts or feelings start up again, just put them on leaves and allow them to float by.
- Sometimes the leaf may get stuck, but that's OK, don't try to push it away or rush it, just allow it to float on in its own time.
- If the thought or emotion comes up again, that's OK too, just place it on another leaf and let it float on.
- After a time, gently allow the image of the stream to fade away and then bring your attention back to the room.

## **Mindful pause – 5, 4, 3, 2, 1**

Stop.

Take a moment to check around you.

Slowly, find:

- five things you can see
- four things you can hear
- three things you can touch
- two things you can smell

- and, lastly, one thing you can taste.

## Mindful and relaxing body scan

- Bring your attention to your feet, maybe wiggle your toes, and then allow them to become still. Allow any tension in your feet to gradually drain away, as your feet begin to relax.
- Allow the relaxing sensation to gently move through your ankles, and slowly up your legs, through your calves and shins, knees and thighs, all the way into your hips.
- Notice how soft and comfortable your legs feel.
- Allow that feeling to flow up through your tummy, like taking off a tight belt, allowing your tummy to become soft.
- Notice the feeling as it flows gently up through your chest and back, and imagine each vertebra in your back, and the organs inside your body gently and softly releasing the tension.
- Allow the relaxation to travel through your shoulders and travel slowly down through the muscles in your arm, through your elbows, forearms, into your wrists, hands and fingers.
- Imagine the tension draining down and out through your fingertips.
- Notice how soft and comfortable your arms feel now.
- Now, bring your attention to your neck and allow the relaxation to move up through neck and into your jaw. Allow your jaw and lips to become loose, as the tension continues to drain away.
- Notice as the feeling moves upwards, into your cheeks, nose and eyes. Allow your eyes to feel soft.
- And now notice as the feeling moves through your scalp and into your mind, releasing any tension that was stored there.
- And now check through your body again from your toes to your head and see if there is anywhere that still feel tense. If there is, go to that place and give it permission to relax.
- Notice that every part of your body and mind is relaxed.

## Further information

For further help or advice contact the [Breathlessness Intervention Service](https://www.cuh.nhs.uk/our-services/breathlessness-intervention-service/)

Link: <https://www.cuh.nhs.uk/our-services/breathlessness-intervention-service/>  
on 01223 274404, 09:00 (9am) to 17:00 (5pm) Monday to Friday.

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