

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

DEFINITION

- Relaxation helps to reduce stress and anxiety.

Discuss why this is important for vestibular patients.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Relaxation reduces stress by:
 - Decreasing heart rate
 - Decreasing blood pressure
 - Slowing respiratory rate
 - Increasing blood flow to the major muscle groups
 - Decreasing muscle tension
 - Improving concentration
 - Improving self confidence

Discussion: Picture a time when you felt completely relaxed. Did you notice any of these things?

TYPES OF RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

- Meditation: Focusing the mind on a word or phrase and letting go of other thoughts.
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation: Focus on slowly tensing then relaxing each muscle group.
- Visualization: Visualize yourself in a peaceful, relaxing place.
- Other relaxation techniques include hypnosis, massage, deep breathing, positive affirmations, mantras, aromatherapy, tai chi, yoga, art or other creative endeavors.

Discussion: What types of relaxation techniques have you tried? What worked and what didn't?

TIPS

- Relaxation takes practice! Even if you aren't conscious of feeling anything, the physiologic effects are still occurring.
- Each technique does not work for everyone. You may have to try several techniques before you find the best one for you.
- Don't force yourself to relax; let it happen naturally.
- Make yourself comfortable. Position yourself on chair with neck and back support, a firm bed, or a comfortable mat on the floor. Choose a position that you can maintain for at least 10 minutes.
- Relax in a quiet environment that is distraction-free.
- Relax periodically throughout the day. There are many apps that will remind you to meditate at

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intervals. Some (e.g. [Insight Timer](#)) will also show you how many other people are meditating at the same time, which can be motivating and make you feel part of a community.

- Set a timer so you don't have to worry about how much longer you have to meditate.
- Meditation is becoming mainstream. Don't feel embarrassed to talk about your meditation practice with friends and coworkers. The more open you are about it, the easier it will be to incorporate it into your life. You may even find that others have a meditation practice as well, or want to cultivate one.
- Seek out a group that you can meditate with. There are many local meditation groups that can be found through [Meetup.com](#).
- Take a yoga or tai chi class. Many studios offer "low-impact" classes or classes for people with balance problems (e.g. seniors, MS patients).

Discussion: Share tips that have helped you in your relaxation practice.

RESOURCES

- [Breathing meditation](#)
- [Healing Relaxation](#)
- [Relaxation to Relieve Anxiety](#)
- [Mindfulness Meditation guidance](#)
- [4-7-8 Breathing Technique](#)
- Guided meditations:
 - [Tara Branch](#)
 - [Fragrant Heart](#)
 - [Audio Dharma](#)
- [Yoga for balance](#)
- [Tai Chi for balance](#)

POSSIBLE GUEST SPEAKERS

You could ask someone who knows about relaxation techniques to support this discussion, or have a series of related guest speakers follow in future meetings, e.g. someone to lead a guided meditation, a yoga teacher, and a tai chi teacher.