# Relaxation Exercises

## **The benefits of relaxation**

Whether you are busily researching an assignment, or revising, or even sitting an exam, anxiety can creep in to affect you both physically (e.g. headache, tummy ache) and mentally (e.g. lack of focus). Controlling anxious thoughts using these simple exercises will help you to stay calm and focused on the task in hand. Both exercises are short, enabling you to use them as a physical and mental ‘reset button’ at regular intervals during your studies.

## **Mini-pause: takes 10 – 60 seconds**

Great for clearing your mind, helps you to focus.

Can be done anywhere, anytime.

* Close yourself off from external and internal distractions as much as you can.
* Breathe in slowly to the count of four or five.
* Feel your spine straighten, and your abdomen lift.
* Exhale slowly, keeping your spine straight. Feel your muscles relax. Allow your arms and legs to relax, while keeping your feet flat and firmly on the ground.
* Repeat if necessary.
* Let your breathing return to a more normal level, while you pause a few moments longer.
* Return to whatever you are doing.
* Doing this easy exercise often during the day will help lower your overall anxiety level. Effectiveness increases with practice.

## **Mini-break: takes about 5 minutes**

* Ensure you won’t be interrupted.
* Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor and your knees slightly apart. Place your hands loosely on your lap.
* Ensure the base of your spine is against the back of your chair, your back is straight, and your head feels balanced.
* You should be feeling well supported (grounded).
* Close your eyes.
* Breathe steadily in and out, quite deeply, feeling your abdomen lift as you inhale.
* You are going to focus on each part of your body in turn.
* Start with your head, the muscles in your scalp, your face, and at the back of your neck. Loosen any tension. Aim to feel warm and relaxed. Pay particular attention to your forehead, eyelids and mouth. Open your jaw slightly, let your tongue fall away from the roof of your mouth.
* Carry on down your neck, shoulders and each arm, letting each group of muscles relax as you go.
* Press your feet down into the floor and then relax.
* Take one more slow, deep breath in and out.
* Open your eyes gently, while stretching your hands and feet.
* Look about you and slowly refocus on where you are.

Scan the QR code to book appointments, view our events calendar, watch skills videos and more….