



Fact sheet

Relaxation exercise

This fact sheet describes how to use guided imagery. Learning to do this can help when you feel short of breath. **Get advice from your GP if being short of breath is new for you, or if your breathing is getting worse.**

Prepare

- Find a comfortable position, in an armchair or lying on a bed.
- Tell other people not to disturb you. Put your phone away.

Relax

- Close your eyes.
- If you find it hard to keep your eyes closed, choose a spot on the wall or floor in front of you. Keep your eyes fixed on that point.
- In your mind, check each part of your body to find parts that are tense. Check for frowning, or hunched shoulders. Try to relax these muscles gently.

Think of a scene

Choose a special place that makes you feel happy and secure. It could be indoors or outside. When you have a scene in your mind, use your five senses to make it feel more real to you. Imagine the small details.



- First, what can you see? Think about the shapes and colours.
- Next, what can you hear and smell?
- Imagine picking up a small object. How does it feel? What shape is it? Is it rough or smooth?
- Now, think about the sense of taste. Maybe you have something to eat. Maybe you can taste the fresh air.

Remember how comfortable and happy you are in this special place. When you feel relaxed and it is time to finish, walk away from your scene in your mind.

When you have finished

- After being in a deep, relaxed state, your body needs time to adjust. Enjoy this feeling.
- Get up slowly. Don't rush around straight away.

Tips

The more you practice this exercise, the easier you will find it. With practice, you should be able to tune in to it when you need to.

- Start small – try 10 minutes, twice a day.
- Record your own prompts on a phone, or ask someone to help you. Using recorded prompts can stop your mind from 'wandering off' and help you to focus.

www.kch.nhs.uk/breathlessness-support



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