

"CHILL OUT" EXERCISE



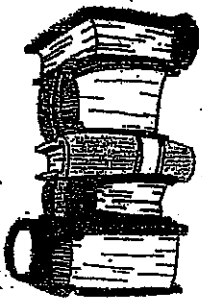
To begin, sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Close your eyes and keep them closed during the exercise. All you need to do is listen to the sound of my voice and follow the directions I give you. Try to think only about what I am saying. Learning this exercise will take a little practice, a little patience and some time. Doing this exercise will become easier and easier each time you practice.

To start, I would like you to take 3 deep breaths. Very slowly, filling your lungs, and then very slowly breathing out. Try to go as slowly and evenly as you can, trying not to take any small breaths in between the deep ones. OK. Go back to your normal breathing.

Now it's time to use your imagination. Just follow the directions as best you can. Pretend you have a whole lemon in your right hand. Now squeeze it hard. Try to squeeze all the juice out. Feel the tightness in your hand and arm as you squeeze. Now drop the lemon. Notice how your muscles feel when they are relaxed. Let's squeeze the lemon again. Try to squeeze this one harder than you did the first one. That's right. Real hard. Now drop the lemon and relax. Let's use your other hand. Hold the lemon and squeeze. Squeeze it hard. Feel the tightness in your hand and arm. OK, drop the lemon. Notice how your muscles feel when they are relaxed. Now one more time. Squeeze it hard. Hard. Great. Okay, drop the lemon. Notice how warm and heavy your hands feel.



Now I want you to hold your arms out in front of you and imagine that you are holding a book. It's a large book. It takes both hands to hold it level. Hold the book steady. Now add another book on top. Now add two more books. Continue to hold them steady. Now add three more books. OK, like magic, the books are gone. Notice how your muscles feel without the weight of the books.



Now pretend you are a turtle. You're sitting out on a rock by a nice, peaceful pond, just relaxing in the warm sun. It feels nice and warm and safe here. Oh-Oh! You sense danger. Pull your head into your turtle house. Try to pull in your shoulders. It isn't easy to be a turtle in a shell. Ah! The danger is past now. You can come into the warm sunshine once again. Just relax and feel the sunshine. Move your head side to side as you look around the pond. Watch out! More danger! Hurry, pull your head back into your house and hold it tight. You have to be closed in tight to protect yourself. Okay, you can relax now. Bring your head out and let your shoulders relax. Notice how much better it feels to be relaxed than to be all tight. There's no more danger. Nothing to worry about. Nothing to be afraid of. You just feel good.

