

Releasing Stress

Sit comfortably with your feet on the floor, or if you are lying down, place a pillow under your neck. Close your eyes, and take three long deep breaths. Notice the muscles relax in your body as you let yourself unwind. Focus on my words and your breathing. Pause and pay attention to yourself. Take three more long deep breaths. Now squeeze your eyes tightly closed. Keep them closed as I count to three. One, two, three. Good. Now let your eyes relax. Keep them gently closed as you let all of the sounds fade. Breathing slowly, fading out the sounds, feeling more relaxed. Squeeze your eyes closed once more. Squeeze hard. And bite down and clench your teeth together. Feel your face muscles tighten. With your eyes closed and teeth clenched, hold it while I count to three. One, two, three. Good. Now relax your face muscles. As your face muscles relax, feel the relaxation spread throughout your body. Take a deep breath as I count to three. One, two, three. Now tense your shoulder and neck muscles by pulling your shoulders up to your ears. Hold that tension while I count to three. One, two, three. Good. Relax your neck, shoulders, arms, and back. And, feel the relaxation spread throughout your body. Now, make a fist with your right hand. Squeeze your fist as tightly as you can. Hold it tightly as I count to three. One, two, three. Good. You can relax your right hand. Make a fist with your left hand. Squeeze your fist as tightly as you can. Hold it while I count to three. One, two, three. Relax your left hand. Both hands are relaxed. Feel the tingling in your fingers while keeping them still. You may feel your hands warming. Pause and pay attention to your relaxed and heavy hands. While relaxing your entire body, say the words to yourself, "Calm and relaxed." "Calm and relaxed." Pause and pay attention to this

sensation of relaxation. Later, as you are preparing yourself for sleep, think back to this moment, and it will help you rest. Keeping your body still and relaxed, tense your stomach muscles. Hold that tension in your stomach while I count to three. One, two, three. Good. Now, relax your stomach muscles. Feel your entire upper body relaxing. Eyes relaxed. Face muscles relaxed. Jaw and tongue relaxed. Neck and shoulders relaxed. Arms relaxed. Hands relaxed. Stomach and chest relaxed. Now, flex your right foot, so it is pointed upward. Keep your foot flexed. And, pull hard so you feel the tension in your right leg, ankle, and foot. Hold that tension while I count to three. One, two, three. Good. Now, relax your right foot, leg, and toes. While keeping your right leg and toes relaxed, flex your left foot, so your foot is pointed upward. Feel the tension in your left leg, ankle, and foot. Hold that tension while I count to three. One, two, three. Good. Let all the tension drain from both ankles and legs. Let all your muscles go limp. Keep your body still and say to yourself, "Calm and relaxed." "Calm and relaxed." Listen to the music as you drift. Now, flex both of your ankles and scrunch up your toes. Keep them as tight as possible. Hold that tension while I count to three. One, two, three. Good. Now, relax your toes, feet, ankles, and legs. Pause and pay attention as your entire body may feel heavy and relaxed. Tell yourself you are as prepared as you can. You make good decisions. People are proud of you. You are making a difference. Let go of any tension and keep your body completely relaxed. Pause, and pay attention to your breathing. And continue to pause and pay attention. Continue to keep your body still. Pause and pay attention to the sensations in your body. Continue to breathe deeply. Good. Soon, when you open your eyes, you will be focused, calm, alert, relaxed, and ready. Remain in your

current position for a few moments. Take three deep breaths. You can now open your eyes and come back. You are aware of your surroundings.