



CLASS 8 | SLEEP, SLEEP, SLEEP WORKSHEET

Easy Relaxation Techniques for Getting a Good Night's Sleep

DIRECTIONS: *Here are some simple exercises that promote relaxation and can help us fall asleep more readily. These strategies are also helpful for falling back asleep if middle or late night waking is a challenge. Teach these strategies to your class one at a time, practicing them together as a group.*

Relaxing Your Stress Triangle: *Your “stress triangle” (your forehead, scalp and upper back area) is where our bodies tend to “hold” tension, especially when we are stressed. Use these simple stretches to relieve your stress triangle and feel more relaxed before bed:*

- **Neck Rolls:** Keeping your shoulders down, lean your right ear onto your right shoulder and then roll your chin onto your chest and over to your left shoulder. Begin with eight of these rotations.
- **Shoulder Shrugs:** Draw circles with your shoulders, one at a time. Try going forward and then backward with them.
- **Pick fruit:** Reach up as if you are picking fruit off a tall tree using one arm at a time. Try doing it eight times on each time.
- **Massage your Shoulders:** With your right hand, massage your left shoulder. Work your fingers gently, but firmly, from your shoulder blade to your neck and include your scalp.
- **Body Roll:** Stand straight and let your head roll forward so your chin touches your chest. Roll your torso down slowly towards your knees and let your hands hang down. Once your hands are as close to the floor as you can manage without being uncomfortable, slowly begin to roll back up to standing. Do this about ten times.

Breathe Deep: *Often a simple physiological change, such as deep breathing, can help us relax for sleep (this exercise is also available as a separate worksheet in the Activity 3 “De-Stress Yourself” Resources)*

1. Find a comfortable place to sit, with your arms supported and your legs resting on the floor.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Next, focus your attention on your breathing. Become aware of the rate and rhythm of your breath.
4. Begin inhaling slowly and deeply through your nostrils.
5. Focus on breathing into your chest and belly as if you are trying to fill a balloon.
6. Purse your lips and begin to exhale slowly through them, controlling the rate and rhythm of your breath.
7. Continue to focus and concentrate on your breath for several minutes.
8. As you begin to feel a sense of calm and focus, continue to breathe deeply for at least 10 more breaths, or as long as time allows.

RESOURCES



9. As you prepare to complete the exercise, take a moment to notice the difference in how you feel, and the sense of peacefulness that results from deep breathing.

Alternate Breathing Exercise: This simple yoga breathing exercise asks us to alternate our breathing between nostrils. Alternate breathing fosters focus and calmness. Watch the instructional videos listed in the Resources section to learn how to practice and teach alternate breathing.

Lavender Oil: Lavender oil has been shown in studies to promote relaxation, and is often recommended as a sleep aid. Offer class members the opportunity to try lavender oil. Purchase high quality lavender oil (see Resources). Place a drop of the lavender oil on small cotton pads and give them to the class members to try (that way individuals can try the oil and decide independently if they like it or not, and can take that sample home with them).