

Tension is an important cause of unhappiness. It poisons your relationships, self-esteem, happiness, and health. It is also an obstacle to change because when you're tense, you tend to do what is familiar and wrong, instead of what's new and right. Mind-body relaxation helps you let go of the negative thinking that makes you tense.

Common types of negative thinking include all-or-nothing thinking, focusing on the negatives, catastrophizing, negative self-labelling, mind reading, and should statements. In mind-body relaxation you practice letting go of tension and negative thinking so that it is easier to let them go in the rest of your life.

Relax your body and your mind will follow. The key to mind-body relaxation is – focus on physically relaxing your body, do not try to relax your mind. Your body and mind relax together. But it's hard to relax your mind. Therefore focus on relaxing your body and your mind will follow.

Try this simple one-minute exercise. Sit in a chair with both feet comfortably on the ground. Imagine your legs and feet becoming heavy. Mentally scan the soles of your feet, and feel each point where your soles touch the ground. It's important that you feel your skin touching the ground. Don't try to visualize it – feel it. Do this for a few breaths. Next, imagine your whole body becoming heavy and loose. Mentally scan the points where your body skin touches the chair. Feel your seat and hips touching the chair. Don't try to visualize it – feel it. Do this for a few more breaths before reading further.

If you did this simple exercise, you're already breathing more slowly and feeling more relaxed. What's amazing is how quickly you can relax once you know how. You relax your mind by focusing on feeling grounded and centered. You become grounded by scanning your body, and feeling your skin touch the ground. You become centered by turning your focus into your body and away from your tension.

When you are distracted, which will happen very few seconds, don't become frustrated or try to relax your mind. Instead return to focusing on feeling the contact you make with the ground, and you will gradually relax. You can relax lying down, sitting on the floor, or sitting in a chair. They all work equally well.

If you do mind-body relaxation for 20 minutes every day for a year, it will change your life. Start slowly with 5 to 10 minutes a day, and let your time grow naturally. If 20 minutes sounds like a lot, consider how much time you waste feeling anxious or angry on a daily basis.

This is not some mystical technique. It is medically proven to relax your body and mind. It is simple but deep. Use it to let go of your tension and negative thinking, and you will begin to change your life.