

Learning to relax will help you reduce your worrying

When you worry your body goes on “alert” much like when you are afraid of something. Imagine if a large, angry dog was growling at you. Your heart would start to race, your muscles would get tense and you might even shake, your face would get flushed and you might sweat. Your body is preparing itself to do something quickly if the dog attacks you.

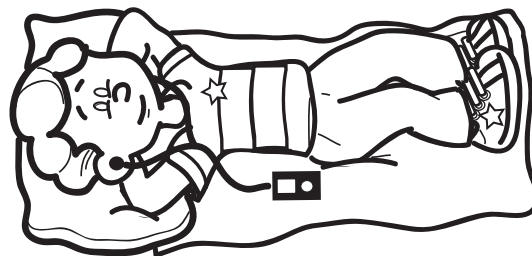
Now just imagine being attacked by a vicious dog. Close your eyes and pretend this happening. You might notice that your body starts to go on alert just thinking about this happening! Worrying about something can make your body go on alert, just as if the thing you are worrying about is actually taking place. But fortunately the opposite of this is also true. When your body relaxes, your brain gets the message that things are not really so bad, and so you stop worrying so much.

Write down five things that you worry about. Write the thing you worry about most, then the things you worry about next, until your worries are in order from most to least.

Now, think about the thing you are worried about the least (#5), sit in a comfortable chair, relax your body, and breathe very deeply in and out for five minutes. Put your hands on your belly, and focus on your belly as it rises and falls (this is called ‘belly breathing’). Clear your mind of all your worries, and just think about your breathing. Try breathing in slowly and then as you breathe out say one letter of your first name. For example, if your name is Miranda breathe in slowly and then as you breathe-out slowly say the letter “M.” Then do the same thing and say the letter “I” as you breathe out. Continue until you spell out your first and last name.

How do you feel? More relaxed? Less worried? Try this again, thinking about the thing that worries you just a little bit more (#4 on your list). Continue this exercise until you have thought about all the things on your worry list.

Worries:





- ★ COMMUNITY
- ★ GUIDANCE
- ★ SUPPORT

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Some people use their imagination to help them relax and stop worrying. They think about a safe and peaceful place when they are worried, while they relax their body and practice belly breathing. In the space below, draw a picture of a place that you would feel safe and peaceful at.

