

# Relaxation Practice Sheet

In order to encourage your body to learn the relaxation response, try practicing these exercises a few times a week. Note your pain level before and after each exercise. The more you practice these exercises, the more effective they'll be.

**Tense and Relax Exercise:** Make yourself as comfortable as possible. Starting at your feet, tense and relax each muscle group in turn by doing the following: Tense the muscles, hold for a beat, take a deep breath, then exhale as you relax the muscles and say the word "relax" either in your mind or out loud. Take about 20 minutes to work through the complete exercise. At the end of the exercise, count back from three to become fully alert and aware of your surroundings.

**Visual Imagery Exercise:** Make yourself as comfortable as possible. Visualize a place that is calm and relaxing. Use all your senses to experience this location -- sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste. Go deeper into your special place, taking deep, calming breaths as you do so. Spend several minutes in the privacy and comfort of your visualized place, taking deep, relaxing breaths. When you are ready, begin the journey back, taking the calming memories of this location with you. Practice this exercise for anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes. Count back from three to become fully alert and awake.

**On the charts below, rate pain levels from 0 to 10 (0 being no pain and 10 being the most severe pain possible).**

Week of:		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Tense and Relax Exercise	Pain level before							
	Pain level after							
Visual Imagery Exercise	Pain level before							
	Pain level after							

Week of:		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Tense and Relax Exercise	Pain level before							
	Pain level after							
Visual Imagery Exercise	Pain level before							
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Tense and Relax Exercise	Pain level before							
	Pain level after							
Visual Imagery Exercise	Pain level before							
	Pain level after							

**Reference:** Adapted from "You Really Need to Relax: Effective Methods." University of Michigan Health System Copyright 2006 Consumer Health Interactive