



Moving on!



Relaxation exercises

and

Calming down techniques



Relaxation exercises and Calming down Techniques

By

Debbie Palphreyman

©2015 Debbie Palphreyman

ELSA Support

www.elsa-support.co.uk

All rights reserved



Bubble blowing

Blowing bubbles is a fantastic way of learning how to breathe when you are feeling tense. Remember you might feel tense when you are angry, scared, worried or upset. Blow the bubbles gently with your lips pursed. If you blow too hard you will not see any bubbles as the mixture will not form any bubbles. If you blow too gently then the bubble mixture will not leave the wand. It takes practice to blow lots of bubbles. This is the breathing you need to do when you are feeling angry, scared, worried or upset. It will help to calm you down. Next time you feel angry, scared, worried or upset imagine you are blowing bubbles. Blow 5 sets of bubbles. Breathing out through pursed lips, long and slow and then taking a breath in through your nose before blowing some more bubbles long and slow.

Squeeze and relax

Cut an orange into segments (or a lemon) Squeeze the orange segment as hard as you can to get as much juice as possible out of the segment. Try squeezing for the count of 10 without stopping. Use your whole body to squeeze that segment. When you squeeze hard like this it makes your body tense. This is what tense feels like. You might feel tense if you are angry, worried, upset or scared about something. When you stop squeezing the segment then your body begins to relax. This is what relax or calm feels like. Try and recognise this tense feeling next time you are angry, worried, scared or upset. Imagine you are letting go of the orange segment and allowing your body to relax. You can practise this exercise with playdough, plastercine or clay.

Worry bubbles

If you are worrying about things, then use bubbles to take your worries away. Imagine a worry as you blow your bubbles. Fill the bubbles with your worries and watch them float away. You will now feel calm and relaxed. You don't need to carry these worries around with you.

Happy memories

If you are feeling sad, imagine some happy memories, times when you felt really happy. It might be Christmas, birthdays, a family holiday, a good game you played with a friend. Imagine you are filling your bubbles with each of these happy memories. Look at all the bubbles surrounding you. These are all the happy memories surrounding you making you feel happy.

Smell and relax

You need to find something lovely to smell to practise this exercise. Use a piece of chocolate, perfume, vanilla pod, lavender, anything at all that you like the smell of. Close your eyes and use your nose to smell the item you have chosen. Take the smell deep into your nostrils and think about how wonderful it is, how calm and relaxing it is. It might give you lovely memories. Think about those memories as you smell the item. Breathe in long and slow through your nose. Then breathe out through your mouth. This will help you feel relaxed and calm. Remember this exercise when you are feeling upset, angry, worried or scared. Imagine you have your favourite thing to smell in front of you and smell it as you calm yourself down. Breathe in and out 5 times.

Clap it out

When you feel angry or tense, clap your hands together as hard and as fast as you can. Then stop! Can you feel the fizzing in your hands? That is all the anger leaving your body. Your body is relaxing and beginning to feel calm.

Smell the flower and blow out the candle

This exercise is similar to the 'smell and relax exercise'. Breathe in the scent of a flower and then blow out a candle. Breathe long and slow as you begin to relax. Repeat this 5 times.

Cooling off

If you feel angry, go to the sink and run your hands under the cold tap. Feel the cold, refreshing water running over your fingers, over the back of your hands and over your palms. Keep turning your hands over and back. Imagine this cool feeling spreading over your body until you feel calm. Anytime you feel angry in the future and you can't get to a tap then bring back this image in your mind of that cool refreshing water.

Deflate like a balloon

Demonstrate blowing up a balloon. Tie the balloon and then pop it! (Beware of children who may be afraid of popping balloons). This is what happens when you are angry. The balloon gets bigger and bigger like our anger and eventually it pops. When you get angry you can do things such as hurting other people, hurting yourself or damaging property. Imagine you are filled with the angry thoughts just like the balloon, but you are going to stop getting angry and bit by bit let out the angry feelings just like a balloon slowly deflating. Blow another balloon up but do not tie it, and slowly deflate it. Breathe in and out slowly as you do this. You are letting all the air out. The more the angry thoughts and feelings are replaced with calming thoughts and feelings the smaller the balloon becomes. When the balloon is completely empty then you will feel calm and relaxed.

Paint it out!

Close your eyes and imagine where the anger/worries or fear is in your body. Choose a colour that you like best and pretend to dip your paint brush into a pot of your calming colour. Paint over all those scary feelings. You now feel calm.

Shells

Close your eyes and imagine you are on an island and there is a palm tree on it. Imagine you are walking around the island. Can you feel the hot, soft sand under your feet? Can you feel the hot sun beaming down onto your face? Dip your feet into the cool water. Can you feel the gentle waves trickling over your feet? Can you smell the saltiness of the sea? Listen to the seagulls squawking as they fly over you. As you continue to walk around the island, walk over to the palm tree. Sit down on the warm sand and pick up a shell. (Move the shell from their laps to their hands). Relax and enjoy the calm feelings in your mind and body.

Use your senses

Lay down or sit in a comfortable chair. Think about your hearing, close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you. What can you hear? Fill your mind with the sounds. Don't think about the sound just listen to it. Feel yourself relax as you fill your mind with the sound. Stay like this for 5 minutes. You will feel yourself becoming calmer and calmer.

Butterfly on your nose

A butterfly has landed on your nose. It's a bright, beautiful and colourful butterfly. You can see it sitting there right at the end of your nose. It flaps its wings and tickles your nose. You move your nose to try and get it to fly away but it likes being there. Move your nose from side to side. Eventually the butterfly flies away into the blue sky and your face feels very relaxed.

Push the wall

When you are feeling angry, push the wall. Feel all those angry feelings run down your arms, through your hands and into the wall. You may wish to shout at the wall. You feel much calmer after pushing the wall.

Melt the snowman

Imagine you are a snowman. It is freezing cold and you are made from white, crunchy snow. The snow glistens and sparkles but you are very cold. The sun comes out and it warms each part of your body bit by bit. You begin to melt. Your body is melting from the top of your head to your toes, bit by bit. You are totally happy and relaxed.

Turtle shell

A turtle has a hard shell covering them. It helps them to keep safe and protects them. Imagine you have a turtle shell covering your body. It will keep you safe and protect you if someone says something mean to you or tries to wind you up. You can stay safe in your turtle shell. No one can upset you or make you angry when you have your turtle shell on.

Melt the ice cream

Imagine you are an ice cream. Which flavour will you be? Starting at the tip of your ice cream you begin to melt. First your head and neck melts, then your shoulders, arms and right down to your toes. Feel how relaxed you are.

Dragon breathing

Imagine that when you are angry you become a dragon. You are full of heat, fire and smoke. You need to get the fire and heat out of your body. Imagine you are blowing the heat and fire out of your body through your mouth. Blow long and slow, get all the heat out of your body. Breathe in and breathe out the smoke and fire. The more you blow out the calmer you will feel.

Feather blowing

Choose a feather that you really like. This is your feather and you can keep it to practise the blowing techniques. When you get upset, angry, worried or scared then using your feather will help to calm you down. Hold the feather in front of your lips about 1-15cm away and blow the feather to one side and then to the other side. Take a short breath in before blowing again slowly and calmly. Repeat 5 times.

Straw blowing

Here is a glass of orange juice and a straw. Blow into the straw and make bubbles in your orange juice. Notice how your lips are pursed when you are blowing steadily. Imagine you are blowing bubbles into orange juice the next time you feel angry, worried, scared or upset.