



## A-Z of Activities

### Relaxation

For residents, stress can be brought on by a range of circumstances including: yearning for their own home, familiar surroundings and routine, getting frustrated if their health is declining, being under- or over-stimulated (for example, too much noise), and lack of choice and/or privacy. Relaxation can help to reduce this stress.

*See the next page for an idea for relaxation*

What the activity can do for the residents	What do you need?	What to be aware of
<p><b>Movement</b> – learning to lie or sit comfortably, to tense muscle groups, to move body parts as required in turn using a technique; deep breathing.</p> <p><b>Sensory</b> – listening to instructions, visualising imagery, being aware of one's body and movement.</p> <p><b>Emotional</b> – relaxation, heightened sense of wellbeing.</p> <p><b>Cognitive</b> – following instructions and sequence, concentration, imagination, heightened mental alertness.</p>	<p><b>Facilities</b> You will need a quiet place with minimum disturbance, comfortable seating and subdued lighting.</p> <p><b>Staff/skills</b> When running sessions you need to be able to use your voice to make participants feel relaxed.</p>	<p>All participants should be in a supported and comfortable position.</p> <p>Avoid sudden noise and unnecessary interruptions.</p> <p>Make sure that you have enough time to end the session properly.</p> <p>Consider how you like to relax. Ask people what they do or did to relax. Can you support residents to relax in different ways?</p> <p>Does the environment help people to relax? Are there quiet, private spaces?</p> <p>Consider relaxing activities like reading out loud to someone, music, massage, time in the garden, walking.</p>



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### An idea for relaxation

Relaxation can be carried out in a chair or on a bed. Here is a seated relaxation:

- Ease hips to the back of the chair.
- Allow the legs to fall naturally outwards and, if comfortable, allow the feet to roll onto the outer side.
- Sitting upright, allow the shoulders to drop 'softly'.
- Rest the hands on the lap with the palms facing up.
- Let the elbows bend gently.
- Rest the chin on the chest without constricting the throat.
- Eyelids should feel heavy, relaxed and gently droop or close.
- Let the head slowly roll forwards.
- Allow the tongue to drop loosely in the mouth.
- Pay attention to the breathing and gradually slow this down. Encourage breathing through the nose, sitting up straight.
- Place the hands lightly towards the front to the rib cage, arms and shoulders relaxed. Breathe in for two counts and out for three through the nose.
- Be conscious of breathing in and out. Remember that breathing in is feeding the body with vitality, while breathing out is getting rid of anything they don't need.
- Concentrate on breathing in a relaxed and peaceful state.
- Release tension from different parts of the body, concentrating on each part in turn: tense and relax the muscles – forehead, cheeks, jaw, neck, shoulders, upper arms, lower arms, hands, upper chest, shoulder blades, midriff, hollow of back, stomach, bottom, thighs, calves, feet and toes.

It may help to use the following statements to encourage residents to relax a particular body part:

- **Feet:** Rest your feet – let your toes lie free, heavy and smooth.
- **Hands:** Allow your fingers to curl gently.
- **Body:** Sit still, heavy and relaxed in your chair – do not make any movement.



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- **Shoulders:** Allow your shoulders to droop and to feel heavy and relaxed.
- **Head:** Gently drop your head forwards; let it be heavy and relaxed.
- **Mouth:** Move your lips, and teeth, slightly apart.
- **Throat:** Let your throat feel loose and open.
- **Breathing:** Take slow, deep, gentle, controlled breaths. Keep your breathing natural. Breathe out the tension and breathe in peace.
- **Voice:** Relax your voice; do not make a sound.
- **Eyes:** Feel your eyes lightly closed behind smooth eyelids.

Ask people to wake up slowly by moving their fingers, lifting their head to look around, stretching their spine, lifting their shoulders and moving their arms, and stretching their legs.