

RELAXATION RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHILDREN

The Relaxation Response can be elicited by two steps practiced once or twice each day. Length of practice should be prescribed based on age, attention span, emotional maturity, motivation and other factors. Two to five minutes once per day would be appropriate for young children and length of time can be extended up to 20 minutes two times per day for adults.

These are the two steps:

1. Repetition of a special word, phrase, prayer, sound or muscular activity that is synchronized with slow breathing
2. Refocus on the repetition whenever other thoughts intrude

Research shows that the effectiveness of the Relaxation Response is enhanced when the repeated phrase has personal meaning. Therefore, collaborate with the child in selecting a “special word” or phrase. For young children, the phrase could consist of the name of a teddy bear or other calming or reassuring subject.

A two-syllable word or phrase is easiest for young children to synchronize with breathing. The first half of the word or phrase is repeated silently during the in-breath and the second half is repeated during the out-breath. Some examples are:

- Re-lax
- Be calm
- Feel good
- Stay calm
- Peace-ful
- O-kay
- Ha-ppy
- Be strong
- I can