

The Relaxation Plan

Four steps, every box checkable. Print it, fridge it, start tonight.

CHECKED AGAINST TIER 1 GUIDANCE

NCCIH · MEDLINEPLUS · NIA

1 PICK ONE TECHNIQUE AND NAME IT

- ☐ **Breathing exercises:** slow, deep, from the diaphragm. The cheapest start.
- ☐ **Progressive relaxation:** tense one muscle group, then release it.
- ☐ **Guided imagery:** picture a calm scene until the body follows.
- ☐ **Or:** autogenic training, self-hypnosis, biofeedback-assisted relaxation.

Pick ONE. Six half-started habits beat nothing, but one finished one beats six.

THE SIX, RANKED BY EVIDENCE

Slow, deep breathing	BEST
Biofeedback (heart rate)	BEST
Progressive relaxation	USED
Guided imagery	USED

2 RUN IT DAILY FOR TWO WEEKS

- ☐ Same slot each day _____ · Length _____ minutes
- ☐ Tick a box each day: **MTWTFSS · MTWTFSS**
- ☐ Rate your stress out of ten on day 1 _____ and day 14 _____

TOO MUCH STRESS LOOKS LIKE

Headaches, aches, stiff neck or jaw, poor sleep, low focus. If it stops you working or living, call your provider.

3 ASK BEFORE YOU ADD ANY CAPSULE

- ☐ **On blood pressure treatment?** Follow the plan your provider prescribed.
- ☐ **Pregnant or nursing?** Do not start a new supplement without asking.
- ☐ **Any prescription at all?** Supplements can weaken or strengthen it.

4 ADD A SINGLE INGREDIENT CAPSULE IF YOU WANT

- ☐ **One ingredient per bottle,** so you know what you are testing.
- ☐ **Amount per serving printed** on the label, not just on the front.
- ☐ **USP or NSF mark:** made properly, holds what the label says.

BEYOND THE BOTTLE · YOUR REVIEWS, YOUR FREE OPTIONS, YOUR WHY

WHAT THE REVIEWS ACTUALLY FOUND - circle the one you will try

TECHNIQUE	LOOKED AT	FINDING
Heart rate biofeedback	24 studies	Helped stress
Diaphragm breathing	3 studies	Early promise
Slow breathing	17 studies	Modest BP drop
Relaxation therapies	29 studies	Weak support

NCCIH reports these reviews and flags that study quality often ran low to very low. Promising is not proven.

FREE FIRST - none of it costs anything

Slow, deep breathing	10 min	Free
Progressive relaxation	15 min	Free
Guided imagery	10 min	Free
Autogenic training	15 min	Free
Self-hypnosis	10 min	Free

All six are named by NCCIH. Most need nothing but a chair and a timer.

WHAT THE RELAXATION RESPONSE DOES - why the habit is worth it

✓ Breathing slows down	✓ Heart rate comes down
✓ Blood pressure comes down	✓ The stress response is reversed
✓ Muscle tension eases off	

Chronic stress keeps the body alert with no danger present, and over time raises the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and more (MedlinePlus).