

This is printed as part of a series of occasional papers produced by
BIRMINGHAM & DISTRICT TINNITUS GROUP
presenting a variety of points to offer information and support for our members
Written and circulated by Eileen Hewitson of B&DTG at their June '07 meeting

Relaxation Workshop Sheets

A FEW BREATHING EXERCISES

The breathing exercises are about balance and control. We know that slowing the breath down slightly reduces the level of oxygen in the blood stream and increases carbon dioxide. The latter quietens the activity of the brain and this can calm the mind and reduce tension. There should be no strain in the body when doing the exercises.

Make sure that the back is straight and hands resting where they are comfortable. Remember to keep the shoulders and face relaxed.

- Take one, two or three easy breaths in and out, through the nose if this is comfortable, just watching it enter the body and leave the body. Observe the gentle rhythm that comes with breathing easily and effortlessly. You can concentrate on the tip of the nose and see how the breath leaves the body slightly warmer and slight moister. This can be practised as many times as you like during the day and can, of course, be done anywhere.
- Take a breath in and out and then just stay quietly WITHOUT BREATHING IN AGAIN, for a second or two, just until you feel the need to breathe in again. Let no strain enter into this exercise. Notice the space between one breath and the next.
- Take a breath in through the nose and then out through the nose and when you think the lungs are empty, BLOW OUT through the MOUTH, pursing the lips. It is surprising what air still remains.

There are many, many breathing exercises and they can greatly aid concentration, clarity of thought and produce a sense of inner quiet. You can find out about more breathing exercises, or attend Yoga classes.

DIY MASSAGE

1. Neck Strain

Although the head is designed to balance on the neck without undue strain, we often stick out our chins, especially when watching television or sitting at a computer. The result is the neck muscles tense up to take the full weight of the head.

- **Thumb Squeeze**

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Place the right thumb at the right-hand base of the skull, and the left thumb at the left-hand base of the skull. Press firmly to relax tight muscles using a small circular movement.

2. Stiff Shoulders

Stress forces the shoulders up towards the ears and sitting for long periods forces the muscles to do the wrong sort of movement. Stiffness in the shoulders restricts the ribs and how deeply we can breathe.

- **Shoulder squeeze**

- Put the right hand on the left shoulder near the neck. Gently squeeze the shoulder muscle that starts at the base of the neck, working outwards all the way down to the elbow. Repeat twice more and then work the left side.

- **Ironing Down**

Place the flattened palm of the right hand on the left shoulder near the neck and stroke firmly along the shoulder, all the way down to the elbow. Repeat on the other side.

TRY THIS FOR ANOTHER WAY TO ACHIEVE A QUIET MOMENT

Adopt a plan. Adapt it to suit yourself.

1. Sit comfortably in a chair, body balanced, feet on the floor.
2. Lower the eyelids or shut the eyes.
3. Take a breath in and as you breathe OUT, let go.
4. Relax the hands by
 - a) placing the palms down in the lap for a slow count of 1...2...3
 - b) turn the palms to the ceiling and count slowly to 1...2...3
 - c) turn the hands palm downwards for a count of 1...2...3
 - d) let the hands rest comfortably in the lap.
5. Take three breaths in and out, saying to yourself, "In for one, out for one... In for two, out for two... In for three, out for three."
6. Now at the same slow pace, say to yourself a set of three words or phrases, such as..
CALM... CALMER... QUITE CALM... or
RELAX... RELAXING... QUITE RELAXED... or
PEACE... PEACEFUL... AT PEACE...
7. When you are ready, let yourself become alert, again with a count of... ONE eyes opening...
TWO becoming alert... THREE quite alert and feeling good.

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