

RELAXING YOUR MIND AND BODY

Often in our busy, day-to-day lives we forget to take a moment to relax. Some of us even give ourselves a long list of excuses for NOT taking the time to relax. The truth is, however, we are much more productive, focused and creative when we've taken the time to take care of ourselves. Below you will find some hints to help you get started.

1. Make time to relax your mind daily.
 - Plan at least half an hour out of each day to just do absolutely nothing. Early morning meditation can be the best way to start your day.
 - If half an hour seems like too much time, start with a smaller chunk of time and gradually increase it. Remember, by taking the time to relax, you will save time later due to your increased productivity.
 - Even a few moments in the car before dashing into work can make the difference. Try arriving to work ten minutes early, close your eyes and rotate your shoulders several times before exiting the car.
2. Physical exercise has a number of positive relaxation benefits you may not be aware of:
 - It improves blood flow to your brain, bringing additional sugars and oxygen, which may be needed when you are thinking intensely.
 - It can cause release of chemicals called endorphins into your blood stream. These give you a feeling of happiness and well being.
 - An important thing to remember is that exercise should be fun – if you do not enjoy it, then you will probably not keep doing it. If you find that gardening, walking, or a rigorous workout helps you relax, then go for it!
3. Here are some relaxation exercises you can practice.
 - Deep breathing techniques: Relax the body by performing a series of deep breaths. As you inhale allow the lungs to completely fill, then exhale slowly and think, “relax”.
 - Muscular relaxation techniques: Split the body into zones and concentrate on each specific area separately. Start with the legs. Tense all the muscles in the legs and hold for 5 seconds, then relax and shake them out. Repeat this process for the trunk, shoulders, arms, and face.
4. Pamper yourself. Remember to treat yourself to something special occasionally, for example:
 - Visit a day spa or take a long bath rather than a quick shower. A bath accompanied by your favorite scents can be very calming.
 - Schedule some alone time to read a favorite book or work on a hobby. Also schedule time with a friend or loved one.

Solutions Counseling and Consultation Services is a private practice that offers expertise in a variety of areas such as anxiety, depression, relationship, family, marital, and substance abuse issues. Our professionals include psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychiatrists. We frequently have same day appointments available. Solutions Counseling is the only Pennsylvania multidisciplinary group practice chosen by PacifiCare Behavioral Health as demonstrating superior clinical outcomes in our treatment of patients for the past three years.