

EXERCISES FOR RELAXATION

“ALL STRESSED UP . . . & MILLION PLACES TO GO”

Handout #1

1. **Exercise (sitting).** No matter where you are...at your desk, in a meeting, at home ...you can do this exercise without anyone knowing what you are doing. Wiggle your toes, giving special attention to your big toes for one minute. Then circle your feet by rotating them on your ankles. Next, tighten your buttocks, count to five, and then relax. Tighten your stomach muscles, count to five, and relax. Not only will you relax, but you will shape up. This is a good exercise to do every time a TV commercial comes on the screen.
2. **Exercise (sitting).** Take a deep breath, raise your arms to shoulder height and stretch your fingers until you can feel a pull in the fourth and fifth. Exhale as you lower your arms to your side. Then inhale as you lift your arms so they meet above your head. This gives you a feeling of soaring. Exhale as you lower your arms to your side. Do these two arm exercises five times.
3. **Exercise (standing or sitting).** Stand with your feet hip-width apart, arms at sides and palms out. Inhale and, to a count of 5 stretch arms above head, turning palms out. Exhale and, to a count of 5, lower arms to start of position. Repeat for five minutes.
4. **Exercise (standing or sitting).** Do this exercise whenever you can, wherever you are, whether sitting or standing. Look up at the ceiling or sky while raising both shoulders at the same time. This is also good for those prone to tension headaches, shoulder pains, and neck aches. Do this exercise five times whenever you feel yourself getting tense.
5. **Exercise (standing or sitting).** If during the day you find yourself sighing or yawning, you are simply releasing a bit of tension. Sigh deeply, letting out a sound of deep relief as the air rushes out of your lungs. Don't think about inhaling. Just let the air come in naturally. Each time you breathe out, shake your hands away from your body as if you were throwing your tension away. Repeat this 8 to 12 times, whenever needed.
6. **Eye Relaxation (Palming).** Put your palms over your closed eyes. Block out all light without putting too much pressure on your eyelids. Visualize the color black. You may see other colors or images, but focus on black. Continue with this for two to three minutes, thinking and focusing on black. Slowly open your eyes, gradually getting accustomed to the light. Feel the relaxation in the muscles around your eyes.