

## RELAXATION THERAPY HOME CARE HANDOUT #5

### DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

1. Find a comfortable seat (do not cross your legs).
2. Relax your shoulders (slightly sloped but even).
3. Keep your head straight up and place your hands on your stomach.
4. If it feels comfortable, close your eyes.
5. Breathe in through your nose, feel hands move out.
6. Breathe out **twice as long** through pursed lips, feel hands move in.
7. Perform **10 breaths**.
8. **Repeat hourly.**



### WORK BREAKS

If you sit and work for hours on end at your desk, it is critical to stop at the end of **each hour** and spend **five minutes** walking. This is achieved by getting a kitchen timer which can be easily set for 60 minutes. When it goes off, pick a destination and go for a walk to and from this destination.

### SELF PROGRAMMING

When you are ready to go to sleep:

1. Lay on your back and practice breathing for 5 minutes, while keeping lips relaxed and teeth slightly apart.
2. Say aloud 6 times: “**I will not clench my teeth,**” while picturing yourself sleeping with your mouth relaxed.
3. Start off sleeping on your back. Don’t worry if you move.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity is an active external **stress releasing process** and it has been shown to be highly therapeutic for **anxiety** and **depression**. Choose an exercise that you are comfortable doing and practice it daily or every other day. It is generally safe for most patients to walk 20 minutes per day.

### RELAXATION EXERCISE

1. Choose a quiet, comfortable environment.
2. Lie down, close your eyes and relax.
3. **Concentrate** on, and then **relax**, a specific body part moving from peripheral areas (hands and feet) to more central areas (abdomen, chest, face).
4. Perform **at least once a day** to become proficient at relaxing your muscles.