

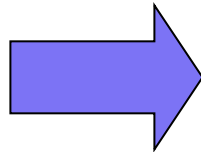
Chronic Pain and the Relaxation Response

Chronic pain can lead to a chronic stress response in your body. The Stress Response floods your body with chemicals made to prepare you for “fight or flight”. The Stress Response is helpful in true emergencies but can wear your body down if it is constantly turned on.

The *Relaxation Response* is a state of rest that is the opposite of the Stress Response. **When you have chronic pain, you need to create the Relaxation Response often.** The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recognizes the Relaxation Response as having great benefits for reduction of pain and better sleep.

Problem

Pain
Muscle Tension
Fatigue
Sleep Disorders
Stress
High Blood Pressure
Low Energy
Anxiety



Solution

Relaxation Response Practice

Starting a Relaxation Response

1. Set aside 10 to 20 minutes once or twice each day to practice the Relaxation Response.
2. Try to find a quiet place where you can sit or lie down alone to practice.
3. Pick one of the following methods to use. You may need to try a few to see which one you like the best, or you can alternate them:

- Deep Breathing
- Tense & Relax (Progressive Muscle Relaxation)
- Guided or Visual Imagery
- Mindful Meditation



Handouts are available on the CHAMPSonline.org website for each of these four methods to help you learn how to create deep relaxation. Ask your health care provider for the relaxation method handout(s) that sound interesting to you.