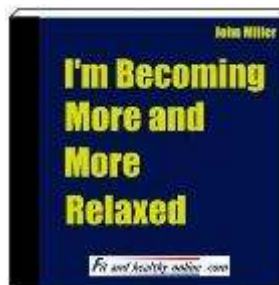


How to Relax Your Mind

A short ebook accompanying the
I'm becoming More and More Relaxed
MP3 audio file.



John Miller

Fit and healthy online

How to Relax Your Mind



Hi, I'm John Miller. Thanks for downloading the **How to Relax Your Mind** ebook and the MP3 audio file that comes with it.

For centuries people have been moaning about the effect that the stress of modern day life is having on them. Here's an editorial from the American Medical Journal that is as appropriate today as the day it was written

It seems to afford a kind of pleasure to this generation to look on itself as the victim of high pressure. We hear much on all sides of the hurry of time, of the pace that kills and of the disturbing and demoralizing effects of modern industrialism and commercialization.

... Yet the feeling that life for most involves a large measure of struggle and output of nervous energy is not peculiar to our time. Each generation looks back with longing on the calmer life of its predecessors ... after all, however, the truth may be that we are inclined to attribute to nervous wear and tear and to an overwhelming multitude of sense impressions, ills that actually are due to other causes. Modern life is a pretty complex affair and it is not easy to analyse it into the factors that tend to modify human existence.

... The root of the matter is that neither modern life nor the urban life is to be blamed indiscriminately for what is popularly denominated nervous strain. If certain factors at present little studied and poorly understood are tending to increase disease of a nervous type, they may be individual more commonly than has been supposed.

And when was it written? 1905.

Abraham Lincoln provided similar cold comfort when he said something to the effect that, 'Most people are about as happy as they want to be.' Most people are about as relaxed as they want to be.

The secret to being relaxed is to do the things that relaxed people do.

How to Relax Your Mind

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How to Relax Your Mind

The average person in the Western World goes to work, goes home, has a drink (or two or three), has tea, sits down, watches television, goes to sleep, wakes up, goes to bed, can't sleep, tosses and turns, gets up the next morning tired and does it all again. No wonder they're stressed out of their brain.

If you can't find time to

- get away from the desk at lunch time and go for a walk
- exercise
- play sport
- play cards
- go for a decent holiday each year
- meditate
- mix with friends
- go to the pictures in the middle of the week
- read a book
- conduct a healthy romantic life,

... it's time you woke up to yourself. Get a life!



Get a life

HOW TO RELAX YOUR MIND

If you want to relax your mind you need to start doing the things that relaxed people do.

For starters they **meditate**. Meditation would have to be the easiest and most cost effective thing you can do to improve your physical and mental wellbeing.

'All man's miseries derive from not being able to sit quietly in a room alone.' Blaise Pascal

There is a compelling reason to meditate. It's not like it's hard. You don't have to do anything except sit in a chair with your eyes closed and drift off with the faeries into the alpha brain-wave zone.

Meditation is the best way to 'warm up' that part of your autonomic nervous system that relaxes muscles and blood vessels. And like a smile, it gives much and costs nothing - just a bit of time.

Most people can't find the time, including those who spend 20 hours a week watching TV.

Secondly, they keep themselves **aerobically fit**. The reasons for doing so are legion but in the stress reduction arena, vigorous physical activity burns up the stress hormones and washes them out of your body. What it does is 'cools down' that part of your autonomic nervous system that wants to fire you up, tighten your muscles and constrict your blood vessels. You can't have a relaxed mind in that state without a physical and mental collapse.

You'll know you're getting the right type of exercise when you get a sweat up. You stimulate your elimination system - which involves your lungs, your skin, your kidneys and your bowel. You also get out of your body the waste products of a toxic environment. You feel better.

They take a **lunch break**, get outside for a wander round.

They take their **holidays**. Paul Pearsal in his book Superimmunity says you need at least one twenty-one day holiday a year. Anything less than that and you're still worrying about the work you haven't completed and the work you still have to do.

Leonardo da Vinci said,

'Every now and then go away, have little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgment will be surer; since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power of judgment. Go some distance away because the work appears smaller and more of it can be taken in at a glance, and lack of harmony or proportion is more readily seen.'

Good advice now as it was then. People like to think life has sped up since Da Vinci but no doubt there was a rat race in Florence in the 16th Century. And speaking of the rat race, as Lily Tomlin said, 'Even if you win the rat race, you are still a rat!'

They **eat wisely**, plenty of fruit and vegetables and not much fat, flour and sugar. They drink plenty of water and hardly any alcohol.

They like a good **laugh**.

How to Relax Your Mind

They have a **distraction strategy** to divert their attention from misery and work. They have hobbies, they play sport, they are members of clubs, they have friends around, they go to the pictures, they play cards, they sing, dance and play musical instruments.

They enjoy gardening. There are few things more relaxing to the mind than gardening. At the end of a day in the garden there's more satisfying than cleaning and packing away the tools and looking back to survey your work.

Finally if you're having trouble relaxing, get yourself a dog. Harry Truman said, 'If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog.' Pretty good advice that pretty much applies world wide. When it sees you it will wag its tail. You'll feel better.

Here's Honey, wonderdog from Canberra, who drags me out of my bed or my office to take me for a walk. She's right here with me as I write, ready to go.



RELAXATION AND MEDITATION

Deep relaxation is one way of getting in control of our bodies and your minds. It is a particularly good way to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system. When that happens, muscles relax and blood vessels dilate to the very core of your body. You feel more relaxed generally and your blood pressure comes down.

The brain operates on a range of brain-wave patterns, measured in cycles per second.

Cycles per second	Brain wave type	Mind state
14 - 20	Beta	Awake
7 - 14	Alpha	Daydreaming
4 - 7	Theta	Sleep
Below 4	Delta	Deep sleep

Meditation and stress management

At the Alpha level we experience the state of deep relaxation which is very useful in managing stress; calming the body and re-establishing equilibrium within the nervous and endocrine systems.

To get into the Alpha state when you are awake, sit or lie comfortably, close your eyes, take a deep breath and as you breathe out count from 3 down to 1 and relax.

Ainslie Meares worked for 30 years as a psychiatrist and used meditation extensively in the treatment of psychosomatic and psychoneurotic illnesses. He died in 1986, but his books are widely read and still readily available. (Ainslie Meares *Life without Stress*. Viking O'Neill 1991 Ainslie Meares *Relief without drugs*. Angus and Robertson 1995)

Here is some of what he had to say about meditation.

You may well ask: 'What is the purpose of experiencing this meditative state for a few minutes each day?' The answer is that it reduces the level of our anxiety.

The effects of meditation include inner peace, better interpersonal relationships, clearer thinking, increased work capacity, better sexual relationships due to less tension, absence of disturbing dreams, and smoother physical reactions often shown in better performances in sport.

The key to management of our stress lies in those moments when our brain runs quietly in a way that restores harmony and function.

It does not require long periods of meditation to obtain relief from stress. Ten minutes twice a day has produced dramatic relief in some hundreds of people who have consulted me professionally.

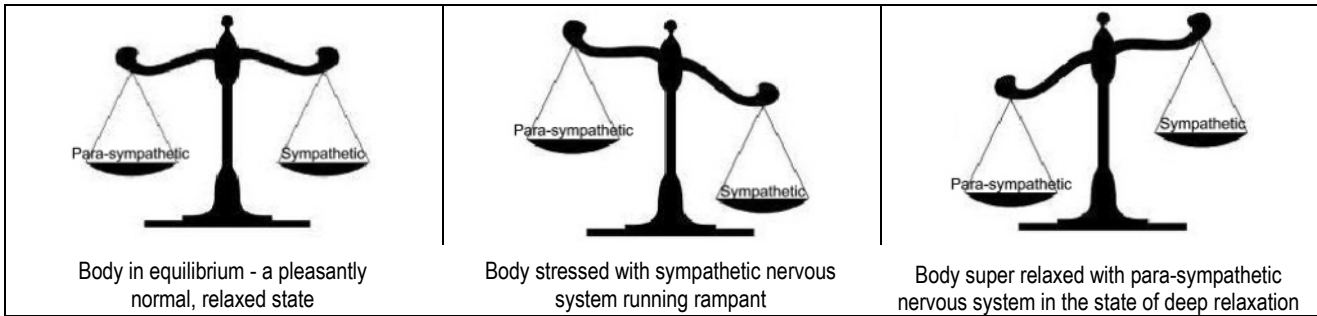
To get the full effect of meditation, it is important not to do it when too tired.

How to Relax Your Mind

THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

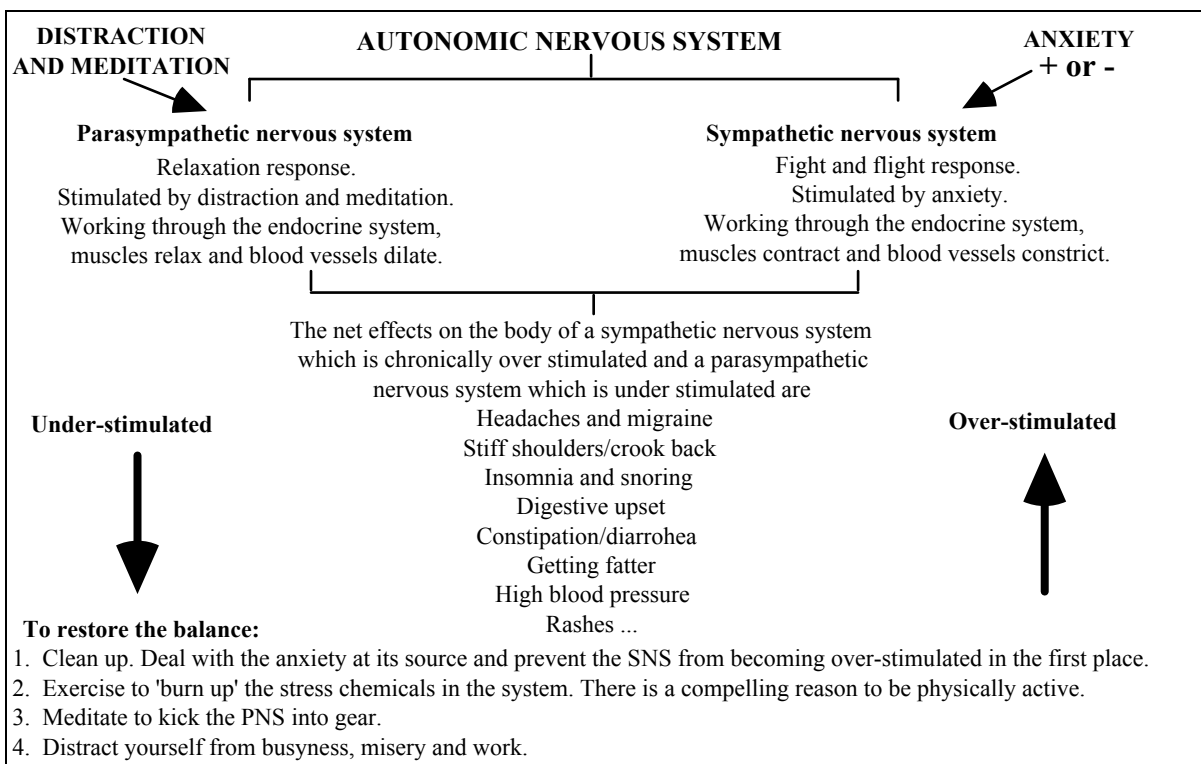
The autonomic nervous system runs sub-consciously the essential processes of your body like digestion and respiration, all of it under unconscious control. You don't have to worry about your heart rate, when to take the next breath, what's happening to your breakfast, it's all automatically controlled from the spot in your brain known as the limbic system.

It has two 'branches' the sympathetic nervous system, designed to help the body deal with stressful situations (whether they be good or bad), and the parasympathetic nervous system designed to bring the body back to a relaxed state of homeostasis.



The autonomic nervous system governs many of the major functions of the body, digestion, respiration and brain activity ...

The autonomic nervous system is a bit like the air conditioner in a large building. Just as the air conditioner ticks over quietly in the background, maintaining a steady temperature all day without the inhabitants being aware of what's happening, so the autonomic nervous system ticks over in the background managing body system functions and helping them to meet the demands of changing conditions. Well, that's how it's meant to operate. Too often the sympathetic side starts working over time. If left too long it gets out of control. You get stressed out of your brain and essential functions of your body become dysfunctional.



How to Relax Your Mind

HEALTH, FITNESS AND WELLBEING PROFILE

The mind is just one of many body systems in a complex ecosystem. The mind and the rest of the body systems are intimately connected. For instance, when we get mentally stressed, the stress registered in the mind is relayed to the body via the autonomic nervous system. Conversely when one of the other body systems becomes stressed, the stress is relayed to the mind. You may not realize how stressed you are until you complete this questionnaire but your body does. The body is incapable of dishonesty!

Circle the number appropriate to the degree to which you experience the symptoms on the left hand side of the page. The greater the symptom, the higher the score. Total the score at the bottom of the page.

	None	Not much			A fair bit			A lot			
1. Headaches (including migraines)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. Lack of energy and vitality	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. Candida - jock itch, thrush, tinea, furry tongue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Poor sleep. (Score 10 if on medication)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. Snoring and/or sleep apnoea (Use gas mask, score 10)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. Crook back, sore shoulders, stiff neck, RSI	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. Frequent colds, flu and sinus	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. Unsettled stomach, reflux. (If on medication score 10)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9. Overweight - 1 point for every 2Kg overweight	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10. Irritable bowel, constipation, diarrhoea, piles ...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11. Shortness of breath from asthma	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12. Low level of fitness*	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13. Chest pain, palpitations	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14. Rashes, zits, skin outbreaks, psoriasis, itchy skin	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15. Mouth ulcers, cold sores ...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16. Elevated blood pressure (Score 10 if on medication)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
17. Elevated blood cholesterol (Score 10 if on medication)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
18. Elevated blood glucose (Score 10 if on medication)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
19. Shakes, nervous tics and mannerisms	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
20. Grinding teeth	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
21. Drinking too much alcohol (2 points per drink/day)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
22. Smoking too many cigarettes (1 point per cigarette per day)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
23. Drinking too much caffeine (1 point per cup per day)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
24. Anxious about life, insecure, apprehensive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
25. Are you depressed? (Score 10 if on medication)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
26. Are you in the wrong job?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
27. Do you feel under-appreciated at work?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
28. Do you have a poor work/life balance?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
29. Are you unhappy with your family life?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
30. Are you unhappy with your financial status?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The score of a normal, fit and healthy human being is less than

TOTAL

* Make an estimate of your level of fitness. You can confirm your estimate by measuring your fitness using the 5 minute 20 metre run. As a guide if you get less than 24 laps score 10. 32 laps scores 5. More than 40 laps scores 0.

To view what the results mean go to page 10.

How to Relax Your Mind

STRESS RISK PROFILE

1. Rate your ability to manage the stress of your life.
The more stressed you are the lower the score

Low	Medium	High									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

2. Do you get a good night's **sleep**. Do you get enough sleep, do you get to sleep quickly, do you sleep like a log and wake up refreshed in the morning?

No		Yes									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

3. What was the longest number of **consecutive days holiday** you had away from home the last 12 months?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	--

4. Are you keeping yourself **fit and healthy** to the best of your ability?

No		Yes									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

5. Is there **balance** in your life? Do you have good **distractors** that switch you off from being busy and miserable and which give you great pleasure?

No		Yes									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

6. Do you **take time off** at lunch time to get away from your desk and get some fresh air? Score high if you exercise with vigor at lunch time.

No		Yes									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

7. What is the average number of **hours you work** each week - include work-work and domestic work, particularly if you have young children?

0	65	1	60	2	55	3	50	4	45	5	10	
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8. Are you good at giving back to your **Self**? Do you spend time thinking about your **Self**? Do you give your **Self** the time and attention it is craving?

No		Yes									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

9. How many times a week do you **meditate**, for 10 minutes or more?

0	1	2	3	4	5	10	
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10. Are you happy with your **family** (and romantic) **life**?

Not at all		Very									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

To better manage your stress, do the things that unstressed people do! **TOTAL**

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A good score on this profile is more than 70. It's based on the habits of unstressed people.

If you want to be less stressed, if you want to know how to relax your mind, start doing the things relaxed people do.

How to Relax Your Mind

Accompanying this ebook is the I'm Becoming More and More Relaxed inner mental training program MP3 audio file. Find a quiet spot to sit down for a few minutes each day, relax, close your eyes, start breathing using stomach breathing and listen to the file.

