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Relaxation Exercise

1. **Step One-** Sit in a comfortable chair with your feet on the floor and your hands in your lap. Try to sit in a chair with you thighs parallel to the ground or lying down with a pillow under your knees.
2. **Step Two-** Pick a spot on a wall that is a little bit above your eye level. Stare at the spot. As you do, count slowly to 20. Notice that in a short while your eyelids begin to feel heavy. Let your eyes close. In fact, even if they don't feel as if they want to close, slowly close them anyway as you get to 20.
3. **Step Three-** Next, take a deep breath in through your nose, as deep as is comfortable, and very slowly exhale out through your mouth. Repeat the deep breath and slowly exhale 3 times. With each breath in, feel your chest and belly rise and imagine breathing in peace and calmness. With each breath out, feel your chest and belly relax and blow out all the tension and the things getting in the way of your relaxing. By this time, you'll notice a calm come over you.
4. **Step Four-** Next, tightly squeeze the muscles in your eye lids. Close your eyes as tightly as you can. Then slowly let the muscles in your eye lids relax. Notice how much more they have relaxed, then imagine that relaxation spreading and flowing from the muscles in your eye lids to the muscles in your face- down your neck into your shoulders and arms- into your chest and down your stomach down your legs all the way to the bottom of your feet. The muscles will take the cue from your eye lids and relax progressively all the way down to your feet.

5. **Step Five-** After your whole body feels relaxed imagine being in the most soothing, comfortable, relaxing place. Think about what things you see while you are there, what is the light like- describe the sights to yourself specifically. Tell yourself about how your calm place smells, what are some soothing smells to you? Tell your self what it feels like on your skin, under your feet or when you are seated or laying down. What are the sounds you notice in your soothing space? Are there any tastes that you are experiencing? Anything else that you notice other people, thoughts you would have, the season, the time anything that will help you be in your calm, soothing, peaceful place.
6. **Step Six-** Enjoy the tranquility for several moments. Then imagine yourself coming back into your body in this place and time. Feel yourself waking up count to ten and when you get there open your eyes feeling relaxed, refreshed and wide awake.

These words can make the steps easier to remember:

Comfort (get comfortable)

Focus (focus on the spot)

Breathe (slow, deep breaths)

Relax (progressive muscle relaxation)

Image (imagine your place)

Up (wake up from your space)