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A newsletter of applications of the FELDENKRAIS METHOD® of somatic education written by Guild Certified Feldenkrais Teachers®

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Three Easy “Peaces” for Deep Relaxation and Stress Relief —by Michael Krugman, M.A., GCFT, 2003

Take All the Time You Need for Each Breath

The whole world may be hurried, worried and harried, but you don't have to be. Here's a way to get yourself from rush hour to hush hour in no time flat.

Three Easy “Peaces” for Deep Relaxation and Stress Relief
—by Michael Krugman, M.A., GCFT, SenseAbility Issue # 27 2nd Quarter, 2003
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Step 1. Sit or lie in any comfortable position.
Close your eyes if you like.

Step 2. Now, breathe easy, and take all the time you need for each breath. That means, take all the time you need to breathe in. Take all the time you need to breathe out. Take all the time you need between breaths. Make no effort to breathe deeply or in any special way. Simply take all the time you need for each breath.

Step 3. Continue for three to five minutes or more.

Step 4. Rest quietly for a few minutes. Feel the result of what you have done. When your breathing becomes truly unhurried, your whole body relaxes and your mind becomes calm and clear.

Main Squeeze

Your “main squeeze” is that special someone you rely on for physical comforting and emotional support when you need it most. But what if that person is absent or unavailable? What if you’re alone? You can be your own main squeeze! Just follow the steps below.

Step 1. Sit or lie down for a few moments with your eyes closed. As before, take all the time you need for each breath.

Step 2. Grasp one thumb with the opposite hand.

Step 3. Slowly inhale, and as you do so, gently, gradually squeeze your thumb. Slowly exhale and as you do so, gradually relax the squeeze and let your hands be still.

Repeat three to five times—slowly inhale, squeeze your thumb, slowly exhale, relax.

Synchronize the squeezing movement with your breath. That means, however long it takes to inhale, that's how long it takes to gradually apply that gentle squeezing pressure to your thumb. However long it takes to exhale, that's how long it takes to gradually relax your grip on the thumb.

Step 4. Rest quietly for several complete breath cycles (inhale/exhale). Feel the effect of what you have done.

Step 5. Repeat the same procedure for each of the other fingers. Squeeze the index finger, the middle finger, the ring finger, the little finger. Be sure to synchronize the movements with your breath. Rest for several breath cycles after each series of movements.

Tranquil Eyes

Closing your eyes is a signal to your body to quiet down, relax, and rest. But sometimes, even though your eyes are closed, they remain tense and restless, and so do you. Here's a remarkably effective way to bring your eyes to a state of profound repose. When your eyes are truly in repose, so are you.

Step 1. Sit or lie down for a few moments with your eyes closed. As before, take all the time you need for each breath.

Step 2. Now, slowly inhale, and as you do so, very gently raise your eyes a little bit as if you were looking up. Your eyelids remain softly closed, and you raise your eyes behind the closed lids.

Step 3. Then, whenever you're ready, slowly exhale and allow your eyes to come to rest. Repeat this movement three to five times, synchronizing the movement of your eyes with your breath.

Note: If you feel any discomfort at all in moving your eyes like that, please raise your eyes in your imagination only. For our purposes, imaginary eye movements are just as effective as real ones.

Step 4. Now, rest quietly with your eyes closed for three to five complete breath cycles (inhale/exhale) and simply feel. Many people report that the volume of their thoughts is considerably reduced, and their minds become very still. See what you discover.

Step 5. Repeat as desired. Be sure to rest after each set of three to five movements.

Note: You may combine all three techniques for even greater benefit. Taking all the time you need for each breath, slowly inhale, squeeze your thumb, raise your eyes up. Slowly exhale, relax your grip, relax your eyes. Repeat for all five fingers. These deceptively simple practices can make all the difference in the way you feel. Practice for three to five minutes, three times a day. Your thoughts will become more positive, your creativity will flourish, and you will see a more beautiful person in the mirror.

—by Michael Krugman, M.A., GCFT, 2003