

## THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

The Relaxation Response is a simple practice that once learned takes 10 to 20 minutes a day and can relieve the stress and tension that stands between you and a richer and healthier life. The technique was developed by Herbert Benson, M.D. at Harvard Medical School, tested extensively and written up in his book entitled, of all things, "the Relaxation Response".

I encourage you to set aside 10 or 20 minutes today and try it. The following is the technique taken word for word from his book.

**1.**

Sit quietly in a comfortable position.

**2.**

Close your eyes.

**3.**

Deeply relax all your muscles,  
beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face.  
Keep them relaxed.

**4.**

Breathe through your nose.  
Become aware of your breathing.  
As you breathe out, say the word, "ONE",  
silently to yourself. For example,  
breathe IN ... OUT, "ONE", - IN... OUT, "ONE", etc.  
Breathe easily and naturally.

**5.**

Continue for 10 to 20 minutes.  
You may open your eyes to check the time, but do not use an alarm.  
When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes,  
at first with your eyes closed and later with your eyes opened.  
Do not stand up for a few minutes.

**6.**

Do not worry about whether you are successful  
in achieving a deep level of relaxation.  
Maintain a passive attitude and permit relaxation to occur at its own pace.  
When distracting thoughts occur,  
try to ignore them by not dwelling upon them  
and return to repeating "ONE."  
With practice, the response should come with little effort.  
Practice the technique once or twice daily,  
but not within two hours after any meal,  
since the digestive processes seem to interfere with  
the elicitation of the Relaxation Response.

- *The Relaxation Response*, Herbert Benson, M.D.