

## Be creative

Find other ways to relax that work for your child. Here are some examples:

- ★ Listen to music.
- ★ Read.
- ★ Do a quiet activity, such as sewing or a craft project.
- ★ Soak in a bubble bath.
- ★ Enjoy the outdoors. Sit outside on a nice day or go for a walk.
- ★ Do simple stretches. For example, stand and gently stretch the arms and legs. Or slowly turn the head from side to side to stretch the neck.

## Be a role model

Your children watch what you do. They are more likely to use relaxation skills when they see you make time to relax.



## Did you know?

Kids who take time to relax each day:

- React less strongly when they are stressed or upset.
- Calm down more easily after a stressful event.
- Are more able to concentrate and be creative.
- Sleep better.
- Have a lower risk for certain mental, emotional and behavioral conditions.

Healthy habits learned as a child lead to healthy habits as an adult. To learn more about how to help your child relax, talk with a member of the health care team.

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MC6848-16



# Healthy Kids: Relax!

Take a break every day



PATIENT EDUCATION



BARBARA WOODWARD LIPS  
PATIENT EDUCATION CENTER

## Relax to Lower Stress

Stress is a normal response to the challenges of life. Some stress can be good. It can motivate children to do well in school and other activities. It can help protect them from danger.

After a challenge passes, the body is meant to go back to a normal, relaxed state. But some children's stress response rarely shuts off.

Children need to relax at least once a day. Relaxation quiets the brain and body. It can help your child feel more calm and balanced.

## What You Can Do

### Practice relaxation with your child

Practicing now can give your child relaxation skills to use for life.

- ★ Practice every day.
- ★ Practice when your child feels good and is calm.
- ★ Practice until your child says it feels easy to relax whenever needed.



**Encourage your child to use relaxation at least once a day — and whenever stress builds up.**

### Create balance

Help your child balance school and other activities. If your child often feels stressed or anxious, perhaps that comes from trying to do too much. Doing too much can bring more stress.

Help your child make realistic choices:

- Teach your child to use a calendar. Put due dates, assignments and activities on it.
- Make a plan for when to get things done.
- Avoid over-scheduling. Before your child signs up for an activity, think about whether it fits in well with other activities and schoolwork.

## Ways to Relax

### Relaxed breathing

Teach your child these steps:

- ➔ Breathe in slowly and deeply to a count of 6.
- ➔ Hold the air in to a count of 4.
- ➔ Breathe out to a count of 6.
- ➔ Do this 3 to 5 times.



### Guided imagery

Teach your child these steps:

- ➔ Think of something that makes you feel calm and happy. It can be anything: a favorite place, food or person.
- ➔ Focus on that image or feeling.
- ➔ Think in detail.
- ➔ Tell what you see, hear, feel, smell, and taste.