

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Learning How to Relax

When we are anxious our bodies can tighten up and this can affect the voice. Learning how to recognise when the muscles are tight and release them can help with talking. The following exercise will help with this.

Relaxation Exercise

Put on some soft music and ask your parent/carer to read out the instructions below. Once you are familiar with the exercise you will be able to try it on your own. (NB. Every movement should be slow and repeated at least two or three times)

- Lie in a comfortable position on your back with your arms away from your side or sit in a comfortable chair with your feet on the ground. Make sure your legs are uncrossed.
- Stretch your whole body so it feels tight. Now breathe out and let yourself go floppy. Quietly close your eyes.
- Now think about your feet. Tighten or wriggle your toes and ankles then let go. Feel the difference. Tighten your legs and let go.
- Tighten your fingers and arms – let go. Feel the difference. They should feel floppy and still.
- Pull your tummy in towards the floor – let go and feel the difference
- Think about your shoulders. Lift them up towards your ears and let go. Feel the difference.
- Think about your face. Make yourself look angry or cross or pretend you have had something nasty to eat – let go. Feel the difference.
- Tightly close your mouth so that your teeth touch and your tongue is tight against the roof of your mouth. Then let it go and feel the difference.
- Every time you breathe out try to feel heavier and warmer.
- Think about something nice for a few minutes.
- When you are ready turn on to your side and slowly sit up.

Making tension go away (Quick relaxation)

(This is useful to use when you are in stressful situation, e.g. talking to someone new, giving a presentation, talking an oral examination)

- Very gently and slowly rock your head from side to side.
- Think about how you would feel if you were lying in a hammock in your garden with the sun shining down peacefully on your face.
- Think of something nice that someone has said to you over the last couple of days.
- Think of something you like about yourself or something you have done recently that you are proud of or have really enjoyed.
- Imagine you are lying on a beach or at the park. Think in turn about all the things you can see, hear, touch or smell.