



Body Scan - Guided Relaxation

This practice is great for kids (and adults) of all ages, whether they're having trouble sleeping, stressed out, sick and in bed, or acting out. It's based on the progressive muscle relaxation technique that Dr. Edmund Jacobson developed in the 1920's. It's used to help alleviate tension when people are in a situation that makes it difficult for them to relax. Guide your kids with these steps:

1. Sit down or lie down comfortably and close your eyes. You can use pillows or blankets to make yourself as comfortable as you can be.
2. Take a few deep, cleansing breaths as you begin to relax.
3. Bring all of your attention to your right foot, noticing how it feels. Squeeze the right foot, making a fist with your entire right foot and all five toes; tense and squeeze it tightly. Hold this tension for two deep breaths.
4. Then release all tension in the right foot suddenly. Relax it completely and notice the tension release. You may feel a tingling sensation in the foot.
5. Take a deep breath, and then move on...
6. Move your attention to your left foot. Same instructions as for the right foot.
7. Move slowly up and around the body, squeezing one body part at a time to create tension, immediately followed by the contrasting sensation of release and ease. Follow each part with a deep, cleansing breath. Here's a sample progression you can follow:
 - Right foot, left foot
 - Right ankle and calf, left ankle and calf
 - Right knee, left knee
 - Right thigh, left thigh
 - All feet and legs
 - Hips
 - Butt

- Belly
- Entire lower body, from tummy down
- Chest and heart
- Right arm, left arm
- Right hand, left hand
- Shoulders
- Neck
- Face
- Whole body at once (do this one twice)

When you're finished guiding your child through the relaxation technique, make sure they spend at least a few minutes in quiet, encouraging them to keep their breathing slow and steady.