

Learn to let go of stress and tension...

This method to help you relax is based on ideas in yoga.

- Settle yourself comfortably and then clench your hands into the tightest fists possible (if this hurts because you have long fingernails, just clasp your hands together instead).
- Look at your fists carefully as you scrunch them harder and harder, being aware of the whiteness of your knuckles, the feeling of your nails against your palms, the pressure of your thumbs against your forefingers and the tension in your wrists. Notice too the tension moving up your arms to your elbows and shoulders.
- Keep squeezing your fists like this and concentrate on the sensations in your muscles for a moment or two. To help you do this, close your eyes.
- Then, with all your attention focussed on how that tension feels, allow your fingers and hands to slowly uncurl and unwind and concentrate on the changing sensation of growing relaxation.
- Still with your eyes closed, feel the enjoyable sensation of relaxation spreading quite naturally through your fingers and up along your arms as the tension drains away. You may find it takes the form of whatever your body needs - coolness if you tend to be too hot or warmth if you tend to feel too cold - or else you might just feel a pleasant tingling sensation.
- Whatever form it takes, allow the relaxing sensation to spread through your body, relaxing your brow, your cheek muscles, your jaw, your shoulders, chest and so on, all the way down to your toes.
- Keep your focus on the stress falling away and the calming differences you can sense in your body. Perhaps you can imagine the stress draining away through the tips of your toes and disappearing into the distance.
- You can repeat this for as long as you like, enjoying the calming changes you notice throughout your body. As your body relaxes so does your mind.