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## Calm Your Mind

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One of the main struggles of people experiencing OCD, are the stress and anxiety associated with this condition. Having to endure negative repetitive thoughts can put a lot of pressure on one's psyche.

It is no wonder that people with OCD can be pessimistic about their condition. How can you expect to overcome the disorder, when you can barely keep the flow of intrusive thoughts from interfering with your daily life? Perhaps it's time for a break, and that's what relaxation techniques can help you with.



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Psychology 101 Part 2



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## Take a Break

You don't need to be on guard every hour of every day. Surely, life will keep going, even if you're not overburdened by it for a while. Make an effort to put aside at least 10 minutes, no matter how packed your schedule may be, and give yourself a well-deserved break from the intrusive thoughts, by learning and practicing relaxation techniques.

## What Is Relaxation?

Let's start by saying that relaxation has absolutely nothing to do with mysticism or spiritual practices. It's just a natural phenomenon which occurs when your body and mind are on hold.

Through relaxation, we can easily reach a level of calm and inner peace, which can help us recover after a stressful day. It might sound easy at first, but for some of us, putting our minds on hold whenever we want, sounds impossible. This is the main reason why we've adopted a step-by-step approach to relaxation.

## **Choose the Ideal Location**

It could be your living room, bedroom or kitchen, the park, the library, a beach or mountain - basically, anywhere that you feel comfortable and relatively at ease. If you are inside, make sure to close the doors and windows, put your smartphone away and turn off the TV. In order to obtain perfect relaxation, you need comfort and silence, so if there is anyone else on the premises, ask them not to disturb you for a while.

It's true that seasoned practitioners can perform relaxation techniques even in the most crowded and loud places, but you still have some way to go before you can reach that level of mastery. As a beginner, it is always best to let your environment help you.

## **Breathe!**

Take slow, deep breaths, then gently exhale. If you're feeling a bit light-headed, slow your breathing in order to prevent dizziness, caused by too much oxygen going to the brain. Right now, your mind should slowly focus on your breathing. Remember, you have to control your breathing. The paradox is that, while your brain is busy controlling your breathing, you won't be bothered by those unpleasant intrusive thoughts, as long as you make an effort to focus on your breathing. Once you've managed to maintain your breathing at a slow and steady pace, it's time to move on to the next stage, which is controlling the stream of thoughts. If you don't feel comfortable moving on to the next step of the process, you can choose to remain focused on your breathing.

## **Focus on Your Thoughts**

People who experience severe anxiety or OCD are constantly troubled by a never ending stream of thoughts that keeps flooding their minds. Trying to block out the stream of thoughts might be impossible for someone who's not quite ready to face his/her obsessions.

## **Look at Your Thoughts**

However, slowing the stream down might be easier than you think. Instead of observing and being overwhelmed by this seemingly endless torrent of thoughts, why not focus on one of them? Once your mind is fixated on one and only one thought, try to let the rest go. Focus on the content of that specific thought and simply accept it as part of yourself. You don't have to judge or eliminate it, just look at it for a moment.

Since you're in total control, you can easily choose another thought to focus on. As you can see, relaxation is not about sitting still and doing nothing, it's about doing something that calms your anxious and overwhelmed mind.