

The Relaxation Response by Herbert Benson M.D.

Meditation: The Four Basic elements

1. **Quiet Environment:** turn off to internal stimuli and external distractions. A quiet environment contributes to the effectiveness of the repeated word or phrase helping to eliminate distracting thoughts (outdoors also good).
2. **Mental Device/Object to dwell:** word, phrase or sound to dwell on while focusing on a particular feeling. Return to this when distractions and wandering thoughts occur.
3. **Passive Attitude-most essential:** emptying all thoughts and distractions from one's mind. Let it happen attitude. When distracting thoughts occur (and they will) defer back to phrase or sounds and let other thoughts pass through.
4. **A comfortable position:** comfortable enough position to maintain it for 10-20min. There should be no muscle tension or laying down to prevent falling asleep. Lotus position preferred by many.

1. *Sit in a comfortable position.*
2. *Close your eyes.*
3. *Deeply relax all your muscles, beginning at your feet & progressing up to your face. Keep them relaxed.*
4. *Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word, "ONE," silently to yourself. For example, breathe IN ... OUT "ONE"; IN... OUT,"ONE", etc. Breathe easily and naturally.*
5. *Continue for 10-20 minutes. You may open your eyes to check the time, but do not use an alarm. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes, at first with your eyes closed and later with your eyes opened. Do not stand up for a few minutes.*
6. *Don't worry about whether you are successful in achieving a deep level of relaxation. Maintain a passive attitude and permit relaxation to occur at its own pace. When distracting thoughts occur, try to ignore them by not dwelling upon them and return to repeating "ONE." With practice, the response should come with little effort. Practice the technique one or twice a daily, but not within two hours after any meal, since the digestive processes seem to interfere with the elicitation of the Relaxation Response.*