

# Day 6: The Relaxation Response

The **Relaxation Response** is meant to counter the stress (“flight or fight”) response.

It is a physical state of deep rest that changes the physical and emotional response to stress.

When eliciting the relaxation response: metabolism, heart rate and blood pressure **decrease**, muscles **relax**, and breathing **slows**.



## Eliciting the Relaxation Response

### 2 Main Steps:

1. Repeat a word, sound, short phrase, prayer or muscular activity
2. Passively disregard everyday thoughts that come to mind and return to the repetition.

## Put it into Action

**Step 1** - Pick a focus word, short phrase, or prayer that is rooted in your belief system

**Step 2**- Sit quietly in a comfortable position

**Step 3** - Close your eyes

**Step 4** - Relax your muscles from head to toe

**Step 5** - Breathe slowly and naturally. As you exhale, repeat your focus word or phrase

**Step 6** - Assume a passive attitude. Don't worry about how well you are doing, return to your repetition.

**Step 7** - Continue for 10-20 minutes.

**Step 8** - Do not stand immediately. Continue sitting quietly, allowing other thoughts to return

**Tip:** Try to practice this technique before breakfast and dinner.

“The ideal is to develop a **routine**, a time to bring forth the **relaxation response** that becomes as much a part of the day as *brushing your teeth*.”

Resource: [www.massgeneral.org](http://www.massgeneral.org), [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org)