

Patient Resources

Relaxation Therapy

Relaxation therapy may consist of many techniques, including:

- *Autogenic Training* allows you to concentrate on the physical sensations of warmth, heaviness and relaxation in different parts of your body
- *Biofeedback-Assisted Relaxation* measures body functions and gives you information about them so that you can learn to control them.
- *Deep Breathing* focuses on taking slow, deep, even breaths
- *Guided Imagery* has individuals focus on pleasant images to replace negative or stressful feelings
- *Progressive Relaxation* is also known as progressive muscle relaxation, and involves tightening and relaxing various muscle groups.
- *Self-Hypnosis* teaches individuals to produce the relaxation response when prompted by a phrase or nonverbal cue



Who is it for?

Relaxation therapy can be beneficial for all individuals, although some find it further induces anxiety, fear, and other opposing experiences to relaxation. *It is important that individuals with arthritis discuss their interest in receiving certain relaxation therapy techniques with their rheumatologist to ensure that it is a safe option.*

Does it work?

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) has conducted and evaluated research on relaxation therapy, although it is not extensive. NCCIH found that electromyographic (EMG) biofeedback, which teaches people to control and reduce muscle tension, helped reduce fibromyalgia pain for short periods of time. It did not help with other common symptoms of fibromyalgia, such as sleep issues, depression, or fatigue. There is also very limited research that relaxation techniques are valuable additions to treatment programs for rheumatoid arthritis.

Before you make your appointment...

- Discuss your thoughts of receiving relaxation therapy with your rheumatologist to ensure the technique you are receiving is a safe option for you.