

How to Actually Relax

According to kungfu :D

What IS relaxation?

STEP ONE: EVERYTIME I SAY THE WORD “RELAX” DURING THIS TALK, **RELAX**. Broadly, relaxation is these three things. To have “total” relaxation you’d need all of them at 100%.

- **The dissipation of KNOTS OF TENSION** - can be muscular fibers, but can also be inflammation in various connective tissues or fascia.
- **The HARMONIZING OF ORGANS** - think about how in a car or computer that’s running well, the various components are synchronized.
- **The QUIETING OF UNCONSCIOUS THOUGHT** - if you want your computer to hum along, to idle perfectly, you’d shut off all the TSRs. We automatically, involuntarily think a huge ton of stuff all the time, and it creates a constant mental / psychological “tension”.

Relaxing Muscles

- There are different types of knots - myofascial, sarcomeres, technical stuff
 - Google it if you're interested; there's tons of info, and you can learn it anytime so let's not waste time with it here
- The important thing is that you can FEEL them
- Attention: Using your focus to aim your brain (I think of it like ssh-ing into an area of my body and digging for more and more specific access from there)
- Releasing: How to issue the “let go” command to tense tissue
- **Let's do some exercises and try it!**
- Next, using PHYSICAL MANIPULATION to release tension
- A note on STRETCHING
- Using both mind & massage together

Relaxing Organs

- Organs are tissue connected to your brain, just like muscles
- Our access to them is *different*, which is why medicine (esp. TCM) differentiates between organ- and musculoskeletal-type systems
- They are *moving even when we're not telling them to*; when we access them it's more like putting a hand on a running motor than turning a wrench
- **Move your focus to feeling them one at a time**
- **Now feel how they connect.** Feel the overall hum / rhythm / oscillation / song of your body doing its thing.
- **GENERALLY, DOING THIS IS ENOUGH:** If adjustments in the rhythm of something (breathing, digestion, whatever) are needed, it will happen on its own in time. Be patient and respectful.

OMG STFU BRAIN

- And you thought the other two slides were tricky
- THIS IS NOT MAGIC OR WOO. IT IS TOTALLY POSSIBLE TO DO DELIBERATELY. It *does* take some practice, but don't give up - it gets easier and the benefits are enormous IMHO
- Identifying the “automatic thoughts” / The Flywheel
- Watching without having an opinion (opinions are more thoughts!)
 - Fun fact: why does doing this tend to put you to sleep? Look up “hypnogogia”
 - But it won't always, and the sleepiness becomes more controllable with practice
- Letting them fall away (still without having an opinion!)
 - Try to “memorize” the feeling of them being off, but try not to define / put words to it
- Staying here / Coming back

So what to do with this info? How can it be useful?

A **very abridged** list:

- Relaxing tight muscles while working, *regularly*, will improve them lots overall
- Relaxing as a response to sudden tension helps prevent injury (falling, stretching, sustaining any injury)
- Relaxing is a key ingredient in using your muscles most effectively -- i.e., being more relaxed makes you stronger, not just over time but *immediately*
- Helping you move in and out of sleep more at will
- Giving you free insight into (and even more control of) your body and your psychology

Question Time (hopefully) and Random Useful Stuff

- **NERDERY:** I've been studying Traditional Chinese Internal Martial Arts for ~10 years. I started with Northern Shaolin Kungfu, Shorin Ryu and Yang Taiji (plus weapons!) at the **SHAOLIN TEMPLE IN WESTLAND, SERIOUSLY WESTLAND** -- it's authentic, run by one monk (Sifu Tom Smith) who's the nicest guy in the world -- if you're interested in learning, go see him (and tell him I said <3!). I now study Xingyi and teach beginner Chen Taiji in Boston.
- **CONTACT:** I have a blog on this stuff at yieldandovercome.com, but I frankly like never get around to updating it. :(Get me online at [\[www.\]](http://www.puredoxyk.com)[\[@\]](mailto:puredoxyk@gmail.com)
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