



*Suzanne Cresswell Presents*

# Unique Learner Solutions

*Finding the Ability in Learning Disability*

## Stress: Where It Comes From and How to Deal with It Relaxation Exercise

The primary source of stress is not the external environment. It's the way we think, the way we interpret events, our perceptions and emotions that determine whether or not, in a particular situation, we will generate stress for ourselves.

For example, when we are feeling good about ourselves and the world at large, a drive along the freeway will be very pleasant, and the occasional careless driver on the road will not disturb this. However, if we are late for an appointment, and, in addition, we have just spilled coffee over a work report, a drive along the freeway becomes very frustrating and it suddenly seems like every other driver is a serious road menace. The number of careless drivers on the road has not changed any – what has changed is our view of the situation.

As a first step to dealing with stress, we can become aware of what we are doing, when we are doing it, and having the opportunity to create behaviors keyed to relaxation rather than stress. By increasing our sensitivity to our actions and to the mental and emotional processes that occur with these actions, we can begin to choose to discontinue our self-destructive habits and self-talk. The greater our awareness, the greater the opportunity for choices and the more control we have over our behaviors. If we really want to know if our behavior is stress-related, then we must pay attention to what we are doing and how we feel when we are doing it. In other words, we must become responsible for ourselves.

Autogenics is a relaxation technique that can help manage stress. Try to practice the entire sequence at least once a day, and initially choose a place to practice that is free from distractions. After a few weeks, you may find that you can decrease the number of repetitions as you begin to respond more readily to the suggestions. It is also important to remember not to try too hard, but rather to let go and give in to relaxation. If your mind wanders while doing the exercises, simply redirect your attention to the exercises as soon as you become aware of this.

## Relaxation Exercise

Make sure you are comfortable, and close your eyes. Repeat the following phrases three times each:

- I am at peace with myself and fully relaxed.
- My right arm is heavy.
- My left arm is heavy.
- My right leg is heavy.
- My left leg is heavy.
- My neck and shoulders are heavy.
- My right arm is warm.
- My left arm is warm.
- My right leg is warm.
- My left leg is warm.
- My neck and shoulders are warm.
- My breathing is calm and regular.
- My abdomen is warm and cool.
- My forehead is cool and smooth.

To bring yourself to an alert state, repeat the following phrase three times:

- I am refreshed and completely alert.
- Take a deep breath, flex your arms and legs, and stretch. Slowly open your eyes.