

CUE-CONTROLLED RELAXATION

July, 2021

1. Set up a cue to remind you to relax.

There are two different types of cues:

- a) **Internal Cue** (sensations within the body)
- b) **External Cue** (things or events in the environment)

Examples of internal cues:

- Physical Symptom: tight muscles, cold hands, feeling hot, hyperventilating, etc.
- Emotional Symptom: feeling frustrated, irritated, annoyed, angry, etc.
- Behavioral Symptom: teeth clenching, heavy sighing or exhalations, yelling, cursing, etc.

Examples of external cues:

- the phone rings
- save a computer file
- let the dog out
- there's a commercial on TV/Radio
- you're at a stop light
- your watch alarm sounds

You can also develop “cue prompts”, such as putting colored dots in certain places (telephone, watch, rear view mirror of car, etc.).

Whenever you experience any of the above cues, practice the exercise whether you need it or not. It's very important that you actually do the relaxation exercise when the cue comes up. Eventually it will become a healthy habit!

2. Relax by doing the following

- a) Take a deep breath
- b) Exhale s l o w l y...
- c) Say a word to yourself as you exhale (e.g., “relax” or “calm”)
- d) As an option (if it's convenient) - Close your eyes and focus on letting your muscles relax

REMEMBER YOUR CUES!!!

Primary Care Behavioral Health