



Stress and relaxation after ABI

"I had a great play specialist in hospital and she showed me how to relax when I felt stressed. Here is what she taught me. It is good if you can get some nice soft music to listen to. I have a CD of rainforest noises! You could try out some of the exercises below when you are stressed or have a headache.

Relaxation exercise

- If you can, lie down with a pillow under your legs and head; if you are in a wheelchair get as comfortable as you can.
- Take three deep breaths. Breathe out slowly as you count to three in your head
- As you lay down, tense and relax each muscle. Start with your toes, your legs, your body, your arms, your shoulders and neck, and then your face. Then relax.
- Take nice deep breaths. You will feel really heavy
- Just enjoy the feeling and listen to the music
- Relax as long as you like but 10 minutes is great if you are just starting.

Guided imagery

Follow the instructions above but try this too! A nice thing to do is imagine you are somewhere you would like to be and as you relax imagine being there. It is a bit like dreaming although you dream what you want to dream about. This is sometimes called guided imagery. If you find it hard to imagine things, ask someone to talk you through. They could ask you questions like: 'Where would you like to go on holiday?' And then you can tell them and imagine going there. It works really well with a little practice.

Aromatherapy

When you are relaxing, it is really nice to have some special aromatherapy oil burning. Ask a friend or family member to help. You can get lots of oils that smell nice. I like using lavender oil when I relax.

Massage

Massage is a great way of easing tension out of the muscles. My mum gives me a massage after I have done my relaxation exercise. It really helps. She also gives me some reiki, which is a bit like a massage. It helps me feel sleepy and calm.

