
Information from your Patient Aligned Care Team

Cue-Prompted Relaxation

In cue-prompted relaxation, you use a “cue” to remind you to relax. The cue may be an internal or external cue.

Internal Cues

An example of an internal cue might be a symptom of stress you are experiencing. There are several different types of internal cues, such as:

- **Physical symptoms:** tight muscles, feeling hot, stomach hurting, etc
- **Emotional symptoms:** feeling angry, frustrated, anxious, etc.
- **Behavioral symptoms:** snapping at others, clenching fist, driving too fast, etc.

Whenever you notice one of your internal cues, it is a signal for you to relax; perhaps by taking a slow deep breath, checking your muscles for tension, or saying something supportive to yourself.

External Cues

An external cue is some outside thing or event that reminds you to relax throughout the day. The cue is not related to a particular symptom of stress, but rather is a reminder to take a minute to make sure stress is not building up. A good cue to use is something that occurs at least a few times per day, but not constantly. The best cue for you will depend on your circumstances, but examples of possible external cues to use might be:

- The phone ringing
- A reminder sticker on a mirror
- Moving from one task to another
- A commercial on TV
- Looking at a watch or clock

Whenever the prompt occurs, scan your body for tension, relax your muscles, and take a slow, deep breath. Do this whether you feel like you need to or not. If you make this a regular habit, you will find that tension does not build up in your body and mind as much as it did in the past.

Follow-up

Whichever type of cue you choose, it is important to follow-up and use the cue each time it occurs. In this way, taking a few seconds to check for tension and relax will become a healthy habit.

Practice

Let's practice and have you choose an external and an internal cue as reminders to relax.

External cue: _____

Internal cue: _____