



**7-DAY**

**RELAXATION**

**CHALLENGE**

*Rachael Kable*

# 7-DAY RELAXATION CHALLENGE



Rachael Kable

**Relaxation is a fantastic skill to learn well and implement on a regular basis.** *It can reduce the impact of stress and allows us to experience meaningful self-care and calmness.*

*When you face stressors, your body experiences the “fight-or-flight” response; physical changes that are designed to help you escape from danger (like increased muscle tension to boost performance, increased heart rate and blood pressure to send fuel to your muscles and brain, decreased digestion to save energy and the release of adrenalin and cortisol). Once the danger disappears, your body normally returns to its resting state.*

*However, when you experience ongoing stress (or many different stressors), your body might not get the rest it needs. Instead, the “fight-or-flight” response keeps working and this can have negative effects on your health and wellbeing (from burn out to poor immunity and digestive issues).*

*Being able to relax is therefore more important than you might think! It allows your body to return to its normal resting state and recover, while you experience a beneficial mental break.*

SO, ARE YOU READY TO CULTIVATE  
MORE RELAXATION IN YOUR LIFE?

I'VE CREATED THIS 7-DAY RELAXATION

»»»» CHALLENGE JUST FOR YOU! ««««

## Tips for completing this challenge:

### PRINT THIS CHALLENGE OUT

*Print this challenge out and answer the prompts by hand each day, or save it to your computer and type your answers into the boxes. These prompts are designed to help you explore your experiences with relaxation – there are no “right” or “wrong” answers.*

### SET A REMINDER

*Set a reminder in your phone to check the challenge activity each morning.*

### ASK A FRIEND TO JOIN YOU

*Ask a friend to join you for this challenge so you can keep each other accountable.*

### COMMIT TO TRYING EACH ACTIVITY

*Commit to trying each activity, even if you have to reduce the time or adjust it to suit you.*

### MISSED A DAY? DON'T SWEAT IT

*If you miss a day, just pick up where you left off (and don't beat yourself up about it!).*

### SOME DAYS ARE HARDER THAN OTHERS

*Remember that some days, you might find it harder to relax and that's okay!*

### I'M JUST AN EMAIL AWAY

*If you have any questions, feel free to send me an email at [hello@rachaelkable.com](mailto:hello@rachaelkable.com) and I'll do my best to help.*

## DAY 1 - ENGAGE IN A CALMING ACTIVITY FOR 30 MINUTES

**We're going to ease into this challenge with a calming activity** – nothing too unfamiliar or advanced! Simply choose a calming activity and schedule it into your day for 30 minutes.

**Why are calming activities helpful for relaxation?** They help us find a state of “flow” and enjoyment. We don't have to think too much or try too hard. We can be present and appreciate a sense of calmness, relaxation, or satisfaction.

### Not sure which calming activity to do? Here are some ideas:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading a book                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Painting, drawing, or colouring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Napping                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Singing                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knitting, sewing, or crocheting | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving yourself a massage       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing an instrument           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing in a journal            | <input type="checkbox"/> People watching                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practising yin yoga             | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking a bath                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baking                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Dancing                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing a card game             | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing with a pet              |

## Journaling prompts

Which calming activity did you choose?

On a scale of 1-10, how did you feel BEFORE the calming activity?

Not relaxed  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10 Very relaxed

On a scale of 1-10, how did you feel AFTER the calming activity?

Not relaxed  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10 Very relaxed

If you could engage in this calming activity regularly, do you think it would help you feel generally more relaxed? Why?

***Congratulations for completing Day 1 of the Relaxation Challenge!***

*I know it can be hard to get started sometimes and I'm so proud of you for taking this step.*

## DAY 2 - USE A BREATHING TECHNIQUE FOR 10 MINUTES IN THE MORNING AND EVENING

- *Breathing techniques are fantastic for relaxation, both physically and mentally. They help you focus your mind (letting go of worries you don't need) and can stimulate a relaxation response.*
- *One of the reasons we breathe rapidly when we're stressed is because **our breathing muscles tighten in preparation for "flight-or-flight"**. Your breathing muscles can start to get tired, sometimes causing even more panic and stress.*
- *Consciously breathing more slowly and deeply can **signal to your body that you're safe**, helping the relaxation response to unfold.*
- *You can use breathing techniques regularly throughout your day, during times of stress, or **whenever you would like to relax**.*

***A few years ago, I was waiting by myself for 15 minutes before going into surgery and I started feeling overwhelmed by fear.** My breathing was rapid, I felt like crying, I wanted to run away and my mind began picturing all the things that could go wrong. I started breathing deeply, taking long inhales through my nose and exhaling through my mouth.*

*Focusing on my breath at this time was so helpful for me and not only allowed me to find a shred of calmness in a scary situation, but gave me a small sense of control over my reaction.*

**Below, you'll find two simple breathing techniques.** Feel free to use the same one twice, or try both. You'll likely notice your mind wandering at times, which is totally normal! Do your best to simply re-focus on the breathing technique.

## Breathing Technique 1: RELAXING WITH THE OUTBREATH

1. Find a comfortable position (either sitting or lying down).
2. If it's safe to do so, close your eyes.
3. Start to slightly deepen your breath, taking slower inhales and exhaling fully.
4. Repeat these deeper breaths for a few breath cycles.
5. Once you feel comfortable with this step, start to consciously release tension from your body with each exhale.
6. You might notice tension melting away from particular areas of your body, such as your face, shoulders, stomach, legs and feet.
7. You might feel a growing sense of heaviness or grounded-ness in your body.
8. Be open to these experiences as you breathe.
9. Once you've finished this breathing technique, take your time to start moving again (don't rush!).

## Breathing Technique 2: SLOW DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

1. Find a comfortable position (either sitting or lying down).
2. Place one hand on your upper chest and one hand just below your rib cage.
3. Inhale slowly through your nose and feel the area below your rib cage expand as the air inflates your diaphragm.
4. When you exhale, feel the air moving out of your diaphragm.
5. Towards the end of each exhale, gently squeeze your stomach to fully expel the air.
6. You don't need to breathe too deeply – just focus on using your diaphragm to breathe.
7. Try to keep your shoulders and chest fairly still. The hand on your upper chest shouldn't move much at all.
8. If you feel comfortable and it's safe to do so, feel free to close your eyes.
9. Continue feeling your breath moving in and out of your diaphragm.
10. Once you've finished this breathing technique, take your time to start moving again (don't rush!).

## Journaling prompts

Which breathing technique/s did you use?

Did you notice any challenges in using the breathing technique/s?

Write down some times when you could use a breathing technique to manage stress or cultivate relaxation (for example, when you're lying in bed at night).

***Hooray! You've completed Day 2 of the Relaxation Challenge.***

*You're doing so well!*

## DAY 3 - GO FOR A 30-MINUTE MINDFUL WALK

**Mindful walking is wonderful for a few different reasons.**

- **You can spend time in nature**, which has been shown to decrease stress and boost relaxation
- **Exercise has also been found to help reduce stress** and releases endorphins (the natural feel-good hormone)
- When you walk mindfully, you also get to **experience the benefits of mindfulness** (presence, non-judgement, clarity, reduced stress and more calmness, to name a few!)

**There are a few different ways you can practise mindful walking.** Feel free to choose one method and focus on implementing it today, or try out all the different techniques.

### Technique 1: MINDFUL WALKING

1. Tune in to the sensation of your feet connecting with the solid ground as you take each step. Feel your heel and then the ball of your foot peeling away from the ground as you walk.
2. You might find yourself walking a little slower, and that's okay! The aim of this exercise isn't necessarily to walk as many steps as possible, but to enhance the quality of each step by paying attention to it mindfully.
3. Alternatively, pay attention to the sensation of your arms swinging as you walk.

## Technique 2: MINDFUL WALKING

1. Notice the world around you as you walk. You might hear birds or traffic, see colours, shapes, textures and shadows, or smell different aromas. Tune in to your senses and really observe what's unfolding in your environment as you walk.
2. Take this technique a step further by slowing down to more fully engage your senses.
3. Rather than walking by a group of aromatic flowers, take the time to actually stop and smell them. If you're walking alongside a river or creek, sit down somewhere so you can close your eyes and listen.
4. Try taking your shoes off to feel the texture of the grass underneath your feet.

## Technique 3: MINDFUL WALKING

1. Notice your breath changing as you walk. This practice can be particularly interesting if you walk in a hilly area as your breath will slow down and speed up.
2. Or, you could try walking faster and slower to observe the changes in your breath with the different paces.
3. The aim with this exercise is to pay attention to your breath as much as you can. Your mind will wander and that's normal – just re-focus on your breath when you remember.
4. Also, the more you practise, the easier this can become (so please don't be disheartened if it's challenging to concentrate at first!).

## Journaling prompts

Which mindful walking technique did you use?

What did you notice about this mindfulness technique?  
For example, was it challenging, interesting,  
meaningful, or calming?

**Tip:** *If you enjoyed this mindfulness technique, you might like to schedule it into your weekly planner! It's a great way to enjoy exercise in a mindful way and relax.*

If you were to try this mindfulness technique again,  
would you change anything?

***Well done for making it nearly halfway through the Relaxation Challenge!***

*I can't wait to share tomorrow's challenge with you – it's a great one!*

## DAY 4 - WRITE ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR

**Gratitude is an amazing practice because it helps you train your mind to look for the good things in your life.** This in itself can be relaxing – rather than looking out for the negative things or worrying about them too much, you can also see the positives and appreciate the good things.

For today's challenge, try to answer all the journaling prompts below (feel free to write/type your answers in the boxes or write in your own journal if you prefer).

### Journaling prompts

Write about 4 things you own that make your life better & why:

1	
why:	

2	
why:	

3	
why:	

4	
why:	

List 6 people you're glad to know and one reason why:

<b>1</b>	
why:	

<b>2</b>	
why:	

<b>3</b>	
why:	

<b>4</b>	
why:	

<b>5</b>	
why:	

<b>6</b>	
why:	

Describe an experience in your life that you're grateful to have had:

--

## Write 4 things you appreciate about yourself:

*(physical qualities, aspects of your personality, achievements or anything else you can think of!)*

One	<input type="text"/>
Two	<input type="text"/>
Three	<input type="text"/>
Four	<input type="text"/>

## List 5 good things about your day so far:

*(these can be small things, like having a warm shower or eating a delicious breakfast)*

One	<input type="text"/>
Two	<input type="text"/>
Three	<input type="text"/>
Four	<input type="text"/>
Five	<input type="text"/>

How do you feel after completing the gratitude practice?

***Congratulations on completing Day 4 of the Relaxation Challenge!***

*Keep up the awesome work!*

## DAY 5 - DO A DIGITAL DETOX & SPEND TIME AROUND NATURE

**Technology and social media can be over-stimulating and intrusive at times.** Spending excessive amounts of time on social media can have a number of negative impacts, from not feeling good enough to spending money on things you don't really want or need as a result of advertising or in order to maintain an image.

**Don't get me wrong** – technology and social media can do incredible things and have many positive aspects.

However, it can be great for relaxation and wellbeing to switch off regularly.

**Your challenge for today is to take some time away from social media (and technology, if you can) and spend some time around nature.**

Sometimes, taking time away from technology and social media can cause some stress because you might feel like you're missing out on things. **Try to ride out this feeling and resist the urge to “check”.** The more digital detoxes you take, the more this stress will subside and the easier it will be to relax.

**Here are some ideas for spending time around nature:**

- buy an indoor plant and find a nice space for it in your home
- forest bathe
- go for a walk in nature
- sit outside and feel the sunshine on your skin
- wander through a flower market
- go fruit picking

## Journaling prompts

Was it easy or challenging to take a digital detox?

What did you enjoy about the digital detox?

Do you think the digital detox was helpful for you?

How could you incorporate regular digital detoxes into your life?

***You're awesome. You've completed 5 days of the Relaxation Challenge!***

*I really hope you're enjoying it so far and that you've found some helpful tips and ideas for inviting more relaxation into your life.*

***Keep up the great work*** – there are just two more days to go!

## DAY 6 - PRIORITISE LAUGHTER & FUN TODAY!

*You're doing so well with this challenge that I decided it's time for you to have some good, light-hearted fun! Sometimes, it can be easy to take life seriously and forget about doing things just because you enjoy them.*

*Today's challenge is simply to do something fun and enjoy a laugh or two!*

*However, don't be fooled into thinking this challenge isn't meaningful or worthwhile – there are some wonderful benefits you can experience as a result of fun and laughter.*

### **Benefits of fun and laughter:**

- **Decrease tension:** it stimulates circulation and aids muscle relaxation, helping you to let go of tension and feel more relaxed physically.
- **Can ease pain** by helping to boost natural pain-killers in your body.
- **Improves your mood.** It may seem obvious, but it's still worth mentioning! Laughing can boost your mood and help you feel happier and more relaxed.
- **Laughter enhances your intake of air,** helping to stimulate your lungs, heart and muscles and increasing the amount of endorphins being released into your body.
- When you share a laugh with someone else, it can **boost your sense of connection.**

## Ideas for prioritising laughter and fun!

Catch up with a friend you love having fun with.

Read a funny book.

Attend a laughter class.

*A few years ago, I went to a wonderful laughter yoga class and had such an amazing time! I felt a little silly and self-conscious at first, but when I let go and allowed myself to just have fun, I couldn't stop laughing and I felt absolutely on top of the world afterwards.*

Engage in play with your kids or a pet and be prepared to just have fun and laugh.

Watch a stand-up comedy show.

Watch a funny television show.

*You know that show that always makes you laugh out loud? Go on, put it on and enjoy!*

## Journaling prompts

Which activity did you do to have more fun and laughter?

Describe your feelings before and after your fun experience?

How could you incorporate laughter into your life regularly?

## DAY 7 - CREATE & IMPLEMENT A RELAXING BEDTIME ROUTINE

*I'll be the first to put my hand up and say that I never used to have a good bedtime routine. Sometimes, I watched dramatic television shows which stressed me out until 2am. I drank too much alcohol, even knowing that it negatively impacted my sleep. I scrolled on social media and then tried to go straight to sleep, even though I was feeling alert. I would lie in bed and think about my to-do lists and my past mistakes or regrets and mentally beat myself up.*

*I finally decided that it was time to change and **create a solid bedtime routine** that actually relaxed me and helped me fall asleep.*

*Here are some of the things I like to do at night time to prepare for sleep and engage in self-care:*

- » Listen to relaxing meditation music
- » Avoid social media and emails
- » Watch a light-hearted, animated tv show with my partner
- » Read an enjoyable fiction book
- » Wash my face and gently massage a night cream into my skin
- » Cuddle my dogs
- » Meditate or practice mindfulness

**To create your own relaxing bedtime routine, answer the journaling prompts on the following page, fill out your relaxing bedtime routine planner and then **implement your routine tonight!****

## Journaling prompts

Brainstorm as many relaxing activities as you can think of that you could do at night time?

Are there any current behaviours you could avoid that interfere with the relaxation process?

Let's imagine you're lying in bed after turning out the light and your mind starts racing, making you feel more and more awake.

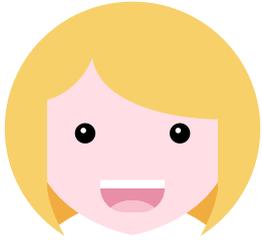
List some strategies you could use to start relaxing again?

**For example:** practice mindfulness, listen to classical music, or use aromatherapy.

MY RELAXING

BEDTIME

PLANNER



USE THIS PLANNER TO CREATE A BEDTIME ROUTINE

To unwind, I will do these relaxing activities:

I will try to avoid these behaviours that interfere with my relaxation:

I will go to bed at this time:

And I will turn out the light at this time:

If I'm struggling to fall asleep, I will:

# YOU DID IT!



You've reached the end of the  
➡️ **7-Day Relaxation Challenge** ⬅️  
good on you!

***I hope you've enjoyed this experience and thank you so much for being involved.***

*I know it isn't always easy to put in the time and effort to create positive changes in life and I just want you to know how proud I am.*

*Relaxation is an incredible skill and it's something I intentionally implement as much as I can. I'm not perfect and I have days when I find it really hard to switch off, but I also know I'm doing the best I can.*

*I hope that as you continue on your own journey with relaxation that you can be kind with yourself and return to this workbook for reminders, tips and ideas to help you relax.*

*I've also created some fun bonus journaling prompts to help you reflect on your relaxation experiences, so when you're ready you can turn to the next page and get started!*



## BONUS Journaling prompts

*When you have some time to reflect on your overall relaxation experience during the challenge, try answering the following questions. This is a great way to identify what worked well for you, what you could improve on and how you can continue implementing relaxation into your life.*

What did you learn during the 7-Day Relaxation Challenge?

Which relaxation activities resonated with you the most?

How could you implement the relaxation activities you just wrote into your life regularly?

What did you find difficult about the 7-Day Challenge?

Is there anything you could do to improve your experiences?

How can you reward or treat yourself for completing the 7-Day Relaxation Challenge?

Okay, now that you know how to reward or treat yourself for completing this challenge,

***please go and do it! You deserve it.***



***Thank you so much for joining me in the  
7-Day Relaxation Challenge!  
and wishing you all the best for your  
future relaxation journey.***

*with love,*

*Rach xx*