

# USING TENSION CONTROL TRAINING

Tension Control Training is based on an approach designed by Dr Philip Snaith to enable people to learn control over tension. We've changed the content to help people relax both their bodies and minds. The approach will work best if you practice it every day over several weeks.



There are no shortcuts to learning this Tension Control approach. Using this handout and the two linked audio relaxation files, you will learn a method of achieving a state of mental and physical relaxation.

The key is to first relax any tension in your body and move your thoughts away from any stressful thoughts. It normally takes a few sessions to learn the skills of experiencing this deep calm, so you need to practice regularly – preferably twice a day. Try to view the session as a “prescription” for each morning and evening.

Each session is just 10 minutes long and you need to find somewhere you can be on your own and not be interrupted by others.

If this is difficult it's important to ask yourself whether you are just too busy to relax and if so what changes you need to make in your life to change this.

Sometimes people find that their thoughts begin to wander as they listen through the session. It's quite normal to find it is hard to do this at first, but with practice and further sessions you'll find it easier and easier to reach a state of calmness.

Over six to eight weeks many people find that they are slowly able to stop using the sound files as they find that they can move towards a state of calm in everyday life.



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**There are two main parts to the approach:**

- 1. In the first two or three sessions you should listen only to the first version of Tension Control training. This will show you how to let calm feelings replace anxious feelings during the session. You will be asked to firstly relax your body, and then to form a mental image of a calm, relaxing scene. This can be anything you want – flowers, a favourite countryside place, memories of a massage, the sea or a relaxing past holiday.**
- 2. After this you should move on to the second version of Tension Control Training where you begin to think about slightly difficult situations where you feel worse and then learn to move away from the upsetting thoughts and stressful feelings this causes. With practice, you will slowly begin to control and respond to tension or stress in real life situations in order to reach a state of calmness. It's a really effective way of relaxing your body and responding to aches, pains and tiredness.**

TCT should occur at a pace that you feel comfortable with. Some people sometimes find they become more tense as they think about trying to relax. If this occurs, consider whether you are trying to picture situations that initially cause too high a feeling of tension or stress. In which case you should choose things which seem easier until your confidence improves. If you continue to feel stressed please take advice from your own doctor before using the approach again.

The really good thing about TCT is that you do it. Once you have learned the skill of controlling tension this skill is then yours for life. Tension Control Training, therefore, is a simple and effective way of helping you change, but remember, it won't help unless you have really made up your mind that you are going to work at it. If you have any questions about this, please discuss this with your own doctor.

