

## BEHAVIORAL RELAXATION POSTURES HANDOUT

The purpose of this exercise is to release as much muscle tension as possible by allowing the bony skeleton to bear the body's weight. This position helps prepare you to incorporate deep breathing into a complete relaxation exercise at times when it is not possible to lie down. Start by sitting in a comfortable chair with your back supported by the back of the chair. Your legs should be uncrossed and resting comfortably on the floor. Your arms should also be uncrossed and resting comfortably on their lap. Next, focus on each of the following body sections and position them in a posture that will allow you to become as relaxed as possible.

Head	Head supported by back of chair or sofa is ideal. If not, head balanced and resting comfortably on top of spinal column.
Eyes	Eyes slightly closed, so that the eyelids are smooth.
Face	All muscles in the facial area relaxed and sagging.
Jaw	Jaw relaxed and teeth slightly separated, about the width of a pencil. Lips together or slightly open.
Back	Spine straight but not rigid. Back, shoulder blades, and buttocks touching the back of the chair.
Shoulders	Hanging loose and limp.
Arms	Bent at the elbow with wrists resting on thighs.
Hands	Resting on lap; palms can be face up or down. Fingers slightly bent.
Feet and Legs	Knees and ankles uncrossed. Feet flat on floor.
Breathing	Deep, easy, regular, and rhythmical

Adapted from: Poppen, R. (1988). *Behavioral relaxation training and assessment*. New York: Pergamon.