



**auto-ness**

PHYSICAL THERAPY

## Embracing Wellness Through Relaxation Techniques in Chronic Pain

Experiencing chronic pain often brings stress, not only physically but also mentally. It can subtly alter your muscle tension, breathing, heart rate, and even blood pressure, leading to increased pain and distress. The psychological impact can disrupt your focus and mood, intensifying discomfort.

Learning to relax is a key strategy in managing chronic pain. There are numerous ways to achieve relaxation, such as reading, watching TV, taking soothing baths, enjoying music, or engaging in peaceful walks. If you already find relief in these activities, continue to embrace them as part of your pain management routine.



However, mastering relaxation is a skill that requires practice. One effective method is the body scan relaxation technique. You can record the instructions on your phone for easy replay, allowing you to focus on the exercise rather than reading the steps each time. Initially, find a quiet space and a comfortable position for the exercise.

With time, you can apply this technique even in stressful situations like traffic jams or daily chores, helping to release tension in areas like your jaw or shoulders.

## Practical Tips for Effective Relaxation

Establish a regular practice, ideally at the same time and place each day. Regular attention to your body's sensations can bring cumulative benefits.

Understand that relaxation is not an instant cure for pain, but a tool to better manage it. Your experience may vary each time, so maintain patience and avoid forcing relaxation.

### Body scan exercise

**Start in a comfortable seated or lying position, with your eyes closed or gaze softly focused. Follow these steps:**

1. Notice the contact points of your body with the supporting surfaces, like your feet on the ground, and your back and legs on the chair or floor.
2. Tune into the sounds within and around your environment.
3. Be aware of any present smells or tastes.
4. Feel your clothing's contact with your skin.
5. Pay attention to sensations on your body's surface. Gently scan from your head down to your feet, releasing tension where possible. If it's challenging, don't be discouraged; simply acknowledge it and move to the next area.
6. Observe your breath, its rhythm, and where you feel it most.
7. If comfortable, experiment with deeper breaths, but allow your breathing to flow naturally.
8. Regularly reconnect with your breath, especially when distracted.
9. Focus on a relaxed or neutral area of your body, observing any thoughts or feelings.
10. Shift attention to a less comfortable area, avoiding the most painful. Explore this area with an open mindset, allowing unpleasant sensations and thoughts without resistance.
11. Return focus to your breath.
12. Conclude by re-engaging with your surroundings, becoming aware of sights, smells, and tastes. Start with short durations (under 5 minutes) and gradually increase as you find the exercise beneficial. Incorporate this body scan technique into your daily routine to enhance your well-being and manage chronic pain more effectively.

## Bonus Tip!

Feel free to engage in this exercise for as much time as suits you. Initially, we recommend shorter sessions, ideally under five minutes. As you become more accustomed to the practice and its benefits, you may gradually extend the duration to fit your comfort level and needs.

Remember, at Auto-Ness Physical Therapy, we're dedicated to supporting your journey toward an active, pain-free life. Reach out to us for personalized, evidence-based care tailored to your unique needs. Let's work together to find the root causes of your pain and embark on a path to long-term wellness. Contact us today at [858-324-5537](tel:858-324-5537) to schedule your assessment.

To Your Health!