

# The Relaxation Response

**Elicitation of the relaxation response is actually quite Easy. There are two essential steps:**

- 1) Repetition of a word, sound, phrase, prayer, or muscular activity.
- 2) Passive disregard of everyday thoughts that inevitable come to mind and the return to your repetition.

**The following is the generic technique taught at the Benson-Henry Institute:**

- 1) Pick a focus word, short phrase, or prayer that is firmly rooted in your belief system, such as "one," "peace," "The Lord is my Shepard," "Hail Mary full of grace," or "shalom."
- 2) Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
- 3) Close your eyes.
- 4) Relax your muscles, progressing from your feet to your calves, thighs, abdomen, shoulders, head, and neck.
- 5) Breathe slowly and naturally, and as you do, say your focus word, sound, phrase, or prayer silently to yourself as you exhale.
- 6) Assume a passive attitude. Don't worry about how well you're doing. When other thoughts come to mind, simply say to yourself, "Oh well," and gently return to your repetition.
- 7) Continue for ten to 20 minutes.
- 8) Do not stand immediately. Continue sitting quietly for a minute or so, allowing other thoughts to return. Then open your eyes and sit for another minute before rising.
- 9) Practice technique once or twice daily. Good times to do so are before breakfast and before dinner.