CUE-CONTROLLED DEEP MUSCLE RELAXATION

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Read slowly, with pauses, to allow imagery to develop.

Stage 1: Muscle Tensing and Relaxing

Find a comfortable chair and sit down. Loosen any tight clothing, take your shoes off, and begin to relax. [Pause.]
Take three deep breaths, and on each exhalation repeat the word "relax"[1] silently to yourself. [Pause.]

[1]Substitute the word “loosen” or another comforting word for “relax” throughout the tape if that word offers more pleasant associations.

Take a mental check throughout your body, noticing any areas of tension. [Pause.] Use your natural diaphragmatic breathing throughout the rest of this session. Allow your breathing to relax those tense areas.
During the relaxation phase for each muscle group, repeat the word "relax" to yourself silently with each exhalation.
Now turn your attention to your *hands*. Squeeze them tightly, tightly. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let them go, dropping them to your lap. Just relax. On each exhalation now, repeat the word "relax." [Pause 15 seconds.]
Turn your attention to your *arms*. Squeeze your arms tightly together. Hold them tightly, as hard as you can, tightly, while you're breathing. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. Drop your arms to your lap. And relax. [Pause 15 seconds.]
Bring your attention to your *shoulders*. Lift your shoulders up to your ears, tightly, hard as you can, and press, while you're breathing. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. Now

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with each exhalation, repeat under your breath the word "relax," letting go more and more. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Bring your attention to your *forehead*. Gently raise your eyebrows, and hold them there while you're breathing. Hold it. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. Relax. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Now bring your attention to your *eyes* and your *nose*. Squeeze your eyes and nose tightly while you're breathing. Tightly. Hold it, hold it. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. Letting that tension melt away. Relax. [Pause 15 seconds.]

And bring your attention to your *tongue*. Press your tongue to the roof your mouth, firmly, tightly. Hold it, hold it. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go, relaxing your tongue. Repeating the word "relax" to yourself on each exhalation. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Now press your *lips* together. Press them firmly, tightly, while you breathe through your nose. Tightly. Hold it, tightly. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. Let go of your mouth and your jaw. Now feeling relaxed and calm. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Turn your attention again to your *mouth* and open your mouth wide, very wide. Breathe. Wide, hold It, hold it. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. And just relax, throwing away the tension. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Now lean forward in your chair. Bend your arms, bring them up to shoulder height and attempt to touch your elbows to your back, flexing the muscles in your *back* and your *chest.* Hold that position. Press, while you're breathing. Press, while you hold it. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. Sit back in your chair again. Just relax, letting go of those muscles more and more. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Turn your attention to your *stomach*. Now extend your stomach and tighten those muscles firmly. Tightly. Hold it, tightly, hold it. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. Relax. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Turn your attention to your *buttocks*. And tighten your buttock muscles by squeezing them together. Hold it, squeeze, hold

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it, tightly. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. And relax. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Now bring your attention to your *thighs*. Slightly lift the left leg and squeeze all the leg muscles in the left leg now. Squeeze them and hold it tightly, while you're breathing. Tightly. (Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. Drop that leg. Let go of all those muscles. And just relax. [Pause 15 seconds.] Now slightly lift the right leg and squeeze all the leg muscles tightly, firmly, squeeze tightly. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. Drop that leg. Completely relax the muscles in the right leg. With each exhalation, repeating the word "relax." [Pause 15 seconds.]

Turn your attention to your *calves*. Keeping your heels on the floor, point your toes up toward your face and lift the balls of your feet off the ground. Tense those calf muscles. You'll feel it in the front of your legs as well. Hold it, hold it. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. Drop your feet and relax those calf and lower leg muscles. That's it. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Bring your attention to your *feet*. Curl your toes, turning them down as if you're pressing them into the sand. Hold those muscles tightly. Hold them, toes curled, hold them, while you're breathing. [Pause 10 seconds.] And let go. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Stage 2: Complete Muscle Relaxation

Now relax all the muscle groups in the body. Just let them all go, with your breathing, relaxing any tense areas. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Imagine the sun shining down, warming the back of your head, producing a soothing, warm, relaxed feeling in the back of your head. [Pause 5 seconds.] Let that feeling flow through your face, and down into your neck, that warm comfortable relaxed feeling [5 seconds]. From your neck into your shoulders, into your shoulder blades, soothing, relaxing, loosening those muscles over your shoulders [5

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seconds], to your arms [15 seconds]. Your upper arms relaxing, loosening those muscles over your elbows to your lower arms, relaxing, soothing the lower arms [5 seconds]. Loosing the muscles over your wrists to your hands, relaxing those hands [5 seconds]. Letting the tension flow out of the fingertips [5 seconds], as that warm, soothing, relaxing sun continues down the back, the chest, relaxing every muscle that comes in contact with that soothing, warm feeling [5 seconds]. Down to the stomach [5 seconds], the lower back [5 seconds], the intestines, warming, soothing, relaxing. [5 seconds].

And the more you notice these sensations, the greater will be your relaxation [5 seconds]. Down to your pelvic region, warm, soothing, and relaxed feeling. Loosening muscles [5 seconds]. In your thighs [5 seconds], upper legs [5 seconds], warm, loosening, comforting feeling across your knees [5 seconds], down into your lower legs [5 seconds], your calves [5 seconds], your shins [5seconds], throwing away the tension, feeling comfortable and relaxed.

That soothing, warm comforting feeling over your ankles [5 seconds] into your feet [5 seconds]. Relaxing the muscles in your feet. Allowing those tensions to pour out of your toes. [5 seconds]. And feeling relaxed and calm [5 seconds.]

Your whole body now comfortable, relaxed, loose. Everyone knows the sensation of comfort that comes from feeling warm and safe [5 seconds].

Stage 3: The Safe Place

Now I want you to go to that safe place. Visualize yourself now in that safe place. Again producing the sensations of comfort, relaxation, and safety that come from that place for you. [Pause 5 seconds.] And you know the feeling. And you know the experience of feeling safe and relaxed, in a place and time without pressure, without responsibilities. Where time seems to stand still or go unnoticed, even if only for a while [Pause 5 seconds].

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Continue to bathe in this comfort [5 seconds]. Perhaps there are certain sounds in that place which offer added comfort. Sounds which add to your experience of safety and comfort. [Pause 15 seconds.] There may even be a pleasant aroma or fragrance [5 seconds].

Possibly you have chosen this particular area because of its special atmosphere, the view you can see from that special spot. And you can enjoy that view now. [Pause 15 seconds.] Continue to drift and float in that image until you hear my voice again.

[Pause for 3 minutes of silence]

You can continue to feel your mind enjoying this experience. You can memorize these feelings [5 seconds]. And you can bring these feelings with you to a future time and place, where they will be most useful to your well-being, to your best interest. [Pause 15 seconds.] You can absorb these feelings like a sponge. [Pause 15 seconds.]

Begin to slowly close this imagery, as you count to yourself from one to five. You can begin to reorient yourself to the room, allowing slight movements of your fingers and your toes now, of your feet, of your hands and arms, and begin to reorient your entire body.

Now, you're ready to open your eyes and enjoy the rest of your day and evening, feeling refreshed and alert.

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