BLACK HAWK COLLEGE

Relaxation Exercise

Here's a procedure you can use to relax before you study or as a refreshing study break. You can also use it to help you go to sleep at night.

Set yourself in a comfortable chair in a quiet room. Tense or contract each muscle group for the count of 10, then relax slowly for the count of 10. For each group, notice the difference between the feeling of tension and the warm, soft feeling of relaxation. Go from tension to relaxation slowly. Think of a balloon slowly leaking air and collapsing or of a flower bud opening and folding back.

1. TENSE AND SLOWLY RELAX YOUR FISTS AND FOREARMS.
2. BEND YOUR ELBOWS AND TENSE AND RELAX YOUR BICEPS.
3. STRAIGHTEN YOUR ARMS AND TENSE AND RELAX YOUR TRICEPS.
4. WRINKLE UP AND RELAX YOUR FOREHEAD.
5. CLENCH AND RELAX YOUR JAW.
6. SHRUG AND RELAX YOUR SHOULDERS.
7. FILL YOUR LUNGS AND LET AIR OUT SLOWLY.
8. PULL IN AND RELAX YOUR STOMACH.
9. PUSH DOWN YOUR FEET TO TENSE AND RELAX YOUR THIGHS.
10. TIP UP YOUR TOES TO TENSE AND RELAX YOUR SHINS.
11. RAISE YOUR HEELS TO TENSE AND RELAX YOUR CALVES.

The whole procedure should take about twenty minutes the first time; it will take much less time later. Eventually, you will be able to put your body in a state of complete relaxation almost at will.

When you have relaxed, think of getting ready to study. Mentally see yourself walking to your study area. See yourself slowly approaching the desk. See yourself opening the book and beginning to study. You should feel no discomfort, no anxiety. And you will now get up and go to work.

Adapted from Raygor and Wark, SYSTEMS FOR STUDY, McGraw-Hill 1970, p. 38-39.