

## Relaxation Exercises

Relaxation exercises help to quieten and focus minds and enable students to be present to the moment and to attend to the task in hand. On the Estuary project these exercises were used for no more than five minutes at the beginning of a workshop and at other times as necessary.

### Guidelines:

- Sit comfortably in an upright chair, feet placed squarely on the floor, spine straight, head up, hands resting in the lap, eyes closed.
- Deep breathe – breathe in and fill the lungs, breathe out by expelling all the air from the lungs. Deep breathing continues throughout the relaxation.

### While deep breathing:

- Tense the muscles of the feet for three seconds and then relax them.
- Repeat this process with the muscles in the calves, the thighs, lower abdomen/pelvic area, thorax (around rib cage), clench hands into fists and relax, continue with the forearms, upper arms, shoulders and neck muscles, finishing by screwing up the muscles of the face and relaxing them.

### Or – Focus attention:

- on the sounds heard outside
- on the sounds within the room
- on the sounds within your body (heart pumping, sounds of blood circulating in the ears, etc.)

Or – rest hands, palms open, flat against the stomach, middle finger tips touching; breathe in deeply and feel the finger tips parting, breathe out deeply and feel them touch again.

Repeat with hands placed on rib cage.

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