



Pressing the Reset Button: Relaxation Skills for EMS Providers

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EMS is stressful.

Duh.

Stressful calls.
Stressful shifts.
Stressful lifestyle.

**This wouldn't be so
bad, except...**

No chance to recover.

Relaxation is an
incredibly effective way
to recover.

It can be **trained**.

What I'm going to cover today

**I. Framework for understanding
relaxation training**

II. Strategies for relaxation

III. How to integrate relaxation into your
life

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This is an overview.

Participate- no need to take notes.

I. Understanding Relaxation

**“Life isn’t a sprint,
it’s a marathon.”**

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it’s a marathon.”**



**“Life isn’t a marathon,
it’s a **series of sprints.**”**

Marathon

Stress-> Stress-> Stress-> Stress

Sprints

Stress-> Recovery-> Stress-> Recovery

You have to balance and
alternate periods of **stress**
and periods of **recovery**.

Little stress, little recovery

Big stress, big recovery

Stress:

- Sympathetic Nervous System (“Fight or Flight”)
- HPA Axis (chronic stress)

Recovery:

- Parasympathetic Nervous System

SNS/HPA -----> PNS

There are a million
ways to relax.

They all might work.
These **definitely** work.

Cognitive Techniques vs. Somatic Techniques

II. Strategies for Relaxation

It's practice time!

**The Powerpoint will be
available or you can email
me directly:**

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1. Cognitive Technique

The Relaxation Response

Steps to Elicit the Relaxation Response

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Relax.
4. Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say **a word or phrase** silently to yourself.
5. Continue for 10 to 20 minutes.
6. When distracting thoughts occur, simply return to repeating your word or phrase .

2. Somatic Technique

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

The Basics

16 Muscle Groups

1. Dominant hand and forearm
 - Make a tight fist while allowing upper arm to remain relaxed
2. Dominant biceps
 - Press elbow downward against chair without involving lower arm
3. Non-dominant hand and forearm
 - Same as dominant
4. Non-dominant biceps
 - Same as dominant

16 Muscle Groups

5. Forehead

- Raise eyebrows as high as possible

6. Upper cheeks and nose

- Squint eyes and wrinkle nose

7. Lower cheeks and jaws

- Clench teeth and pull back corners of mouth

8. Neck and throat

- Counterpose muscles by trying to raise and lower chin simultaneously

16 Muscle Groups

9. . Chest, shoulders, and upper back
 - Take a deep breath; hold it and pull shoulder blades together
10. Abdominal (stomach) region
 - Counterpose muscles by trying to push stomach out and pull it in simultaneously
11. Dominant upper leg
 - Counterpose large muscle on top of leg against two smaller ones underneath (varies)
12. Dominant calf
 - . Point toes towards head

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12. Dominant calf
 - . Point toes towards head

16 Muscle Groups

13. Dominant foot

- Point toes downward, turn foot in, and curl toes gently

14. Non-dominant upper leg

- Same as dominant

15. Non-dominant calf

- Same as dominant

16. Non-dominant foot

- Same as dominant

**Start to combine
muscle groups.**

3. Mixed Technique

Autogenic Training

Autogenic Training Script

1. My arms are heavy.
2. My legs are heavy.
3. My arms are warm.
4. My legs are warm.
5. My heartbeat is calm and regular.
6. My breathing is calm and regular.
7. My abdomen is warm.
8. My forehead is cool.

III. Integrating Relaxation Into Your Life

Find your favorite.

Add it to your day.

1. Daily practice

2. Mini-breaks

3. Ongoing awareness

As I close...

EMS is stressful.

Stress is a fact of life.

Make **recovery a
fact of life too.**

**Relaxation is one good
way to recover.**

And it's easy to learn.

Thank you.

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Questions?