Ways to Relax With Lupus

by ANNA SCANLON

Lupus-Friendly Relaxation Tips

Trying to relax with lupus can be an extremely frustrating experience, least of all because it just really hurts to have lupus. But there are a few ways you can relax and unwind without exacerbating your symptoms even further. In some cases, these tips can actually help improve some of your lupus symptoms.

A Hot Bath

Although it may sound cliché, a hot bath can actually help melt some of your stress away. It is particularly good if you suffer from stiffness in your joints, as many lupus patients (and those with rheumatoid arthritis as well) often struggle with.

Taking a hot bath in the mornings (if it doesn't make you immediately want to curl up and go back to sleep) is an excellent way to help loosen up your body before you start your day.

A calm, hot bath in the evening can also be a great way to help ease your muscle aches and tension of the day. If you take a bath in the evening, you can also use aromatherapy oils to melt even more of the tension away. Most bath shops and drug stores sell bath oils to help promote relaxation, just find one you like and feel like relaxes you well.

However, one thing to take into account when you have lupus is that depending on the medication you're on, your body may be extra sensitive to infection. This means that certain things like bubble baths, bath bombs, bath salts and even bath oils can cause irritation and ultimately an infection.

This is especially true for females who may experience a yeast infection or urinary tract infection after using these types of products. If you are taking immunosuppressant medication, it is best to limit the type of oils and salts you use to no more than once a week.

Relaxation Yoga

Yoga is a great way to balance both the mind and body. It can also help you stretch achy muscles as well as build muscle around the joints where you may struggle with arthritis. If you are a member of a gym or live near a yoga studio, inquire about classes specifically designed for relaxation.

Some yoga classes can be quite intense and offer a full body workout. While this may be something you're looking for, it's not optimal for relaxation.

If you're not feeling your best, or simply don't like being in workout clothes around other people, there are plenty of yoga for relaxation flows on YouTube you can follow along with for free. Doing one of these before a nice, hot cup of tea will definitely help you feel a little less stressed out about what's happening in your life.

Guided Meditation and Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This is a great one, even if you're in the worst flare you've ever been in. Guided meditations and progressive muscle relaxation help you unwind both mentally and physically, and you can find a wide selection of podcasts and YouTube videos that will guide you right into relaxation.

Simply pop on your head phones, close your eyes and listen to what the guide is saying and you'll quickly find yourself no longer worrying about the stress of the day or your aching muscles and joints.

A guided meditation will involve a narrator asking you to think about different peaceful scenarios, such as imagining yourself in a garden or on a beach. The meditations can take anywhere from a few minutes to over an hour, and typically produce very relaxing results if you're accurately focusing.

Progressive muscle relaxation is similar to a guided meditation, however it differs in that the narrator will isolate various muscles in your body and ask you to clench them and then release them. Since you are focusing on this task, your mind begins to quiet and after clenching and releasing your muscles, you will find a lot of tension you may not even be aware you were holding releases.

Finding a progressive muscle relaxation or a guided meditation you enjoy can present a bit of a challenge at times because you'll definitely want to find a voice you don't find annoying. But with a plethora of free tracks out there, it should be no sweat to find something.

Quiet Hobbies

Quiet hobbies are a great way to get your mind off of your troubles and your daily aches and pains. Many of them can even be done in the comfort of your own bed, which is fantastic when you're having a flare.

Things like catching up on reading or Netflix are a great way to unwind, as are activities like scrapbooking or doing a puzzle. At the moment, adult coloring books are all the rage as a relaxing activity, and it can really help you keep your mind off of anything that's bothering you.

Quiet hobbies that allow you to focus on a task you enjoy are the best for relaxation as they keep your mind from wandering into the dark territory of the things that are bothering you.

Beauty Routines

Pamper sessions are a great way to unwind and treat yourself every once in a while. Although it can be expensive, treating yourself to a massage or having your hair done every once in a while is one of the best ways to both unwind and help boost your confidence, especially if you've been feeling unwell.

If your budget is tight you can pick up a face mask at a drug store (or make one yourself with homemade ingredients if you're feeling adventurous!) and let it work its magic on your skin. You can take this opportunity to paint your nails or exchange massages with your partner or a friend.