

Mothers Just Need to Relax



Elizabeth Yarnell

By Elizabeth Yarnell

“**S**he has only one thing on her mind...” went the line from the song on the speakers in my exercise class. “I don’t know who he’s talking

about,” commented the instructor, Kathy, a mother of three and a business owner. “I never have fewer than five things on MY mind!”

Oh yes, I know what you mean! My mind is racing morning ‘til night with lists of things that need to get done, anxieties about my kids health or school, new ideas to implement in my home or business, detailed schedules for everyone in the family... Buy milk. Swimming lessons tomorrow. The kids are out of clean underwear, so better do the laundry. Project due Friday. And on, and on.

I know I’m not alone. Many mothers feel overworked and run down. But besides the issue of simply having too much to do, many of us simply don’t know how to relax.

No, I don’t mean the watching-tv-type of relaxing, even if you’re not multi-tasking by folding laundry, knitting, etc. while you take in *American Idol*. Nor do I mean the day-at-the-spa type of relaxing, though that’s always nice, too, don’t get me wrong. I’m talking about relaxing the body down to the cellular level in a way that will allow the adrenal glands and other organs to rest and replenish.

So what do I mean what I say “relaxation”? Well, here are a few of the many avenues available to find that deep, cellular-level relaxation that encompasses mind and body.

Deep breathing. This is a learned skill of

bringing a breath past the lungs and into the stomach for more efficient and effective respiration. I have used deep breathing to combat everything from claustrophobia to an attack of hives, not to mention as a time-out for myself during trying child-rearing situations!

Yoga. Yoga is a great place to learn correct breathing techniques as well as to stretch and release tension in the muscles. Regular yoga practice can result in a more peaceful mind along with a stronger body.

Meditation. Meditation, or the practice of stilling the mind, can be done anywhere at almost any time. It can slow the heart rate, release anxiety, and leave you recharged for life.

Skilled Relaxation. This is a form of meditation advocated by Dr. Walt Stoll, coauthor of *Recapture Your Health*. In combination with a perfect whole foods diet and regular exercise, skilled relaxation has been shown to help cure some chronic medical conditions.

Self-hypnosis. By using visualization techniques along with relaxation exercises, you can exert mind over body and hypnotize your way to relaxation. It’s helpful to have an instructor or a book to show the way.

This Mother’s Day give yourself the gift of a longer, more healthful, and more relaxed life and commit yourself to learning and practicing a deep relaxation skill that you can use to calm the mind *and* the body.

*Elizabeth Yarnell, CHNP, CNC, is a holistic health counselor whose best selling cookbook, **Glorious One-Pot Meals**, is available online at www.GloriousOnePotMeals.com through May at a 10% discount for Front Porch readers. She writes about healthy recipes and living a natural lifestyle at her blog: www.EffortlessEating.com.*