

## **EXERCISES FOR RELEASING TENSION**

### **The Six-Second Relaxation Breath**

1. Notice any point of tension in your body.
2. As you inhale, breathe into that point of tension, smile inwardly to yourself and say silently, "Alert mind."
3. As you exhale, relax your jaw and feel a wave of warmth and relaxation flow downward shoulders, arms, body, and legs. Say silently, "Calm body."
4. Pause.
5. Find another point of tension and repeat steps 2 & 3.

One cycle takes a mere six seconds, so you should repeat the exercise many times. Repeated breaths are calming and relaxing, and many students find that doing this breathing for five or ten minutes can be transforming.

### **To Breathe Through Your Partners Hands**

This exercise calls on your imagination to offer a simple, quick way to release tension in neck, shoulders, back, and jaw. It's a good exercise for bypassing familiar experiences and invoking new sensations of relaxation, especially for a student who experiences habitual stress. This exercise requires at least 2 people.

1. Partner A places her hands on partner B's neck, shoulders, back or jaw.
2. Partner B, with her eyes closed, imagines breathing in and out through A's hands. B breathes deeply several times and visualizes that part of her body relaxing. She can give herself mental suggestions to relax that part as in the six second relaxation breath.
3. When Partner A feels the tightness relax under her hands she touches another spot, and B again imagines breathing through A's hands in the new spot.
4. After a while, ask the partners to change roles.