

These top tips have been compiled by Marneta Viegas who has developed a pioneering system of children's relaxation using breathing, affirmations, massage and visualisations.

10 Top Tips for Bed Time Relaxation

- 1 Establish a routine – it is very important that children have the security of a bedtime routine. There maybe some opposition to start with, but stick with it.
- 2 Children need to feel secure and loved and hugged. Make sure they go to bed knowing that you love them and any naughtiness has been forgotten.
- 3 Create a calming atmosphere with calming music and soft lighting - making sure your child can't hear loud noises from other rooms.
- 4 A few drops of lavender in an oil burner or on a tissue next to your child's bed will bring calm and a feeling of security.
- 5 Practise a couple of slow deep breaths together. Get your child to imagine they are blowing up a huge balloon or blowing bubbles of peace into the room.
- 6 Try massaging their hands and feet gently – this can really help your child to let go and relax.
- 7 Read story in a calming and slightly monotonous voice.
- 8 Get your child to let go of any worries that are troubling them. They could try putting them in a balloon and letting the balloon float up into the air or whisper their worries to a worry doll.
- 9 Ask your child to repeat a calming affirmation three times such as; *I am calm/peaceful/quiet/relaxed.*
- 10 Finally get your child to lie down and relax all the muscles in their body and read out this relaxation.

The Robot

Close your eyes, be very still and imagine that you are a robot. Your whole body is made of metal. The lights on your arms and legs and stomach are flashing brightly. The robot also makes all sorts of beeping and bleeping noises. It is a very noisy robot. Now, you are going to see if you can switch the robot off and make every part of your body completely still. Start with your right leg - bring all your attention to your right leg and turn off the switch. Your right leg becomes totally still and silent. Do the same to your left leg, switching off the switch and watching the bright lights on that leg turn off. Switch off the light on your stomach and make it very very still

and quiet inside. Now, do the same to your arms, turning off the lights and letting your arms become very still and heavy. Finally, turn off the switch in your head. Switch off your mouth, switch off your nose and eyes and finally switch off your eyes. You should feel very still now. See how still you can make your robot body. Don't forget that if you move anything, then the lights will go back on - so stay as still as you can. How long can you stay completely still and quiet for?

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