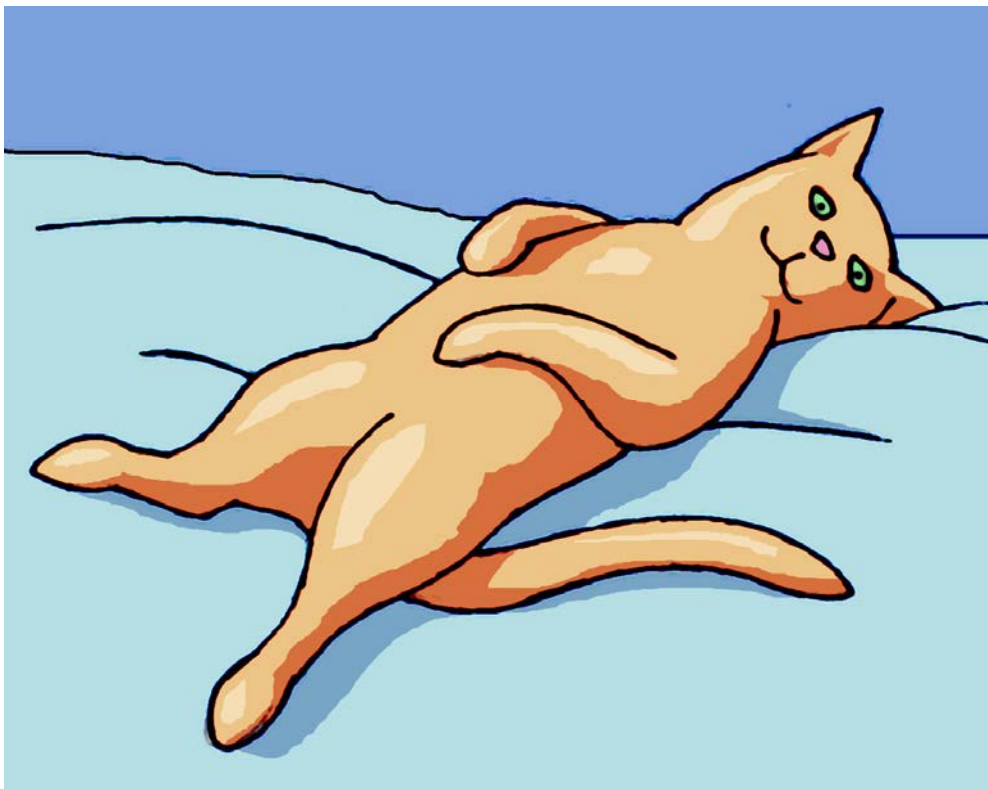


Relax like a cat

Relaxation for children



If you have ever watched a cat sleeping, you will know that cats sleep like they don't have a care in the world. They curl up in a ball or stretch out flat and snooze away in the softest, comfiest spot they can find. Cats are very good at relaxing. They could probably teach us a thing or two about how to relax.



Try to imagine that you are a cat and you are going about your day in a calm and relaxed way. The first thing you are going to do is pretend that it is morning, the sun is only just beginning to rise and you are still asleep. So close your eyes and pretend you are still asleep and are breathing deeply while having a nice dream about chasing mice.

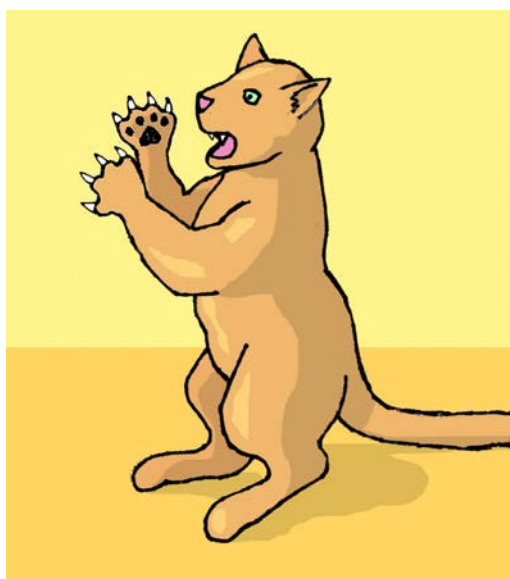
So take a long breathe in through your nose...
and a long breathe out through your mouth....
a long breathe in through your nose...and a long
breathe out through your mouth...in through
your nose....and out through your mouth.

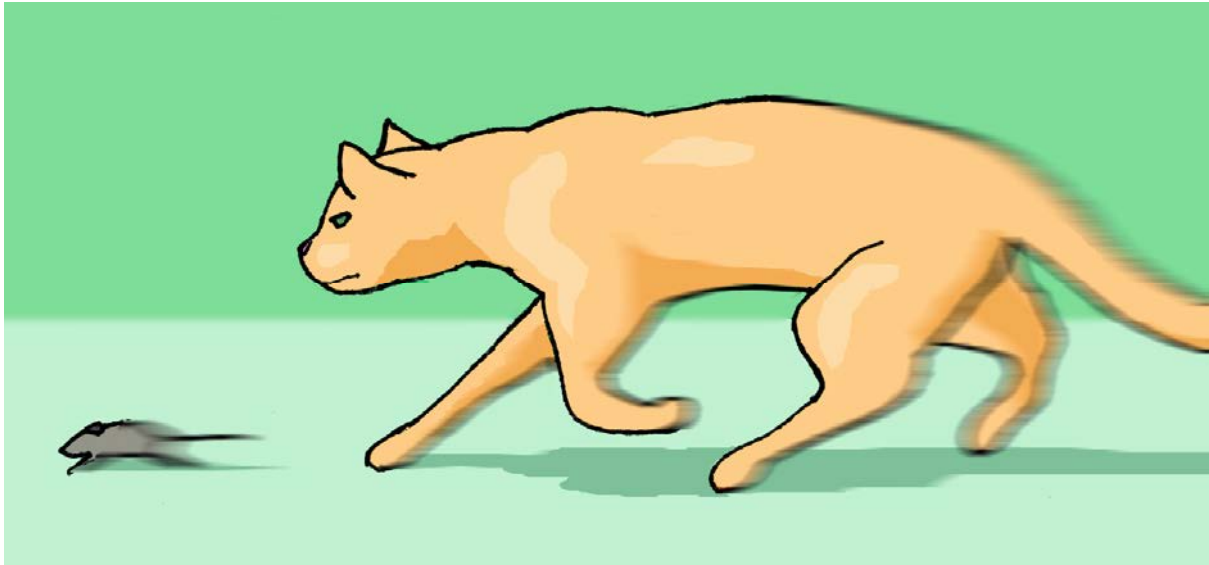
Breathe in slowly....and breath out slowly...
breath in slowly...and breathe out slowly.
Breathe in....and breath out...breath in...and
breathe out. And with each breathe out you will
feel more and more relaxed, like a sleeping cat
just snoozing away as the sun is gently rising in
the sky.



Now you are probably feeling a little more relaxed let's think about your body, making different parts tense and then relaxed. This will help you relax even more. Now you are having a lovely dream about chasing mice but you need to get your claws out so you can catch them.

Pretend your hands are claws and make them as tense as you can, making them into a tight claw shape that is good for catching mice. Keep them all tense, feel your hands getting tighter and tighter as you clench your muscles. And then let your hands relax; the mouse has slipped away in your dream. Feel the tightness drain away as your hands get more and more relaxed.





Then you dream you see another mouse, so tense your hands up into claws again as you dream that you are ready to pounce on the mouse. Feel all the muscles in your hands as they tighten into a claw shape. Clench them as tight as you can, and then let them relax again.

Feel all the tightness drain away from the muscles in your hands - let the mouse get away for today.

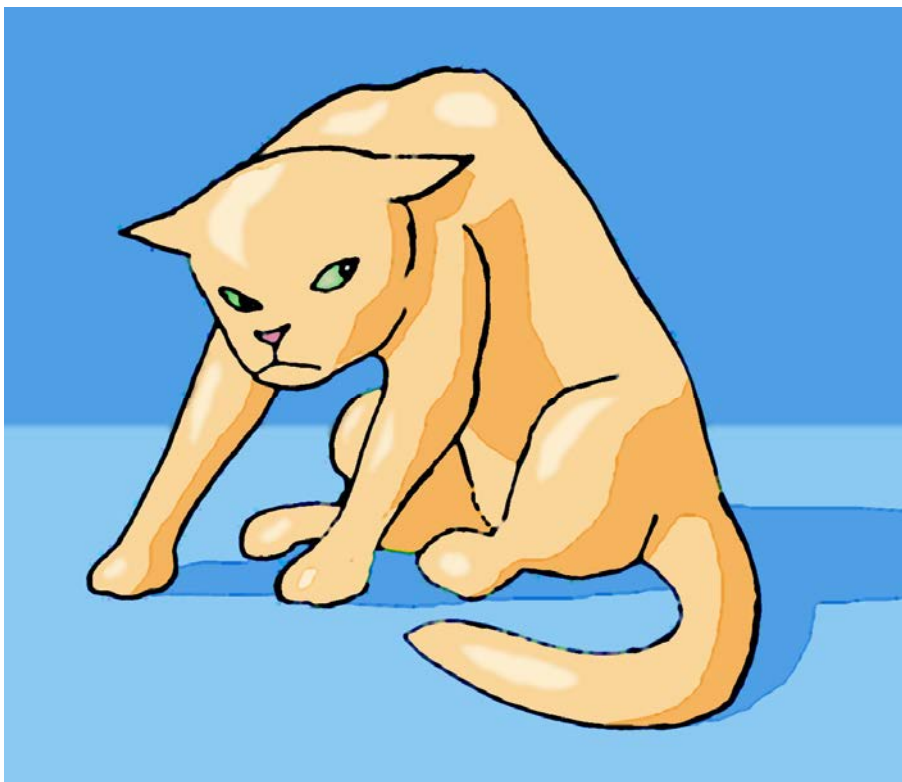
Now the warm sun has risen high in the clear blue sky. It is shining on your face, and you are ever so slowly starting to wake up from your dream. You yawn and take a big stretch just like a cat.



Stretch up with both your arms raised high above your head. Stretch as high as you can, feeling the tightness in the muscles of your arms. Then let your arms flop to your sides, letting the muscles relax. And stretch up again, reaching up to the ceiling, then let your arms flop to your sides again.

Now, a big person wants to give your head a stroke. You don't really liked being stroked by the big person as her stroke is quite hard, and that makes your head wobble. But you will let her as she will give you some breakfast in a minute or two.

So pretend that a big person is stroking your head a bit too hard. Raise your shoulders up and sink your head down into your neck to keep your head from being wobbled around. Tense your shoulders and make your neck feel all tight with this effort.



After about ten seconds the big person stops stroking you, phew! Now you can relax your shoulders and neck. Feel all the tightness drain away as you relax.

But now the big person wants to stroke you again - so hunch your shoulders up and sink your head down into your neck. Feel the muscles in your neck and shoulders get all tense again. Then at last she has gone to get you your breakfast - so you can relax your shoulders and neck properly.

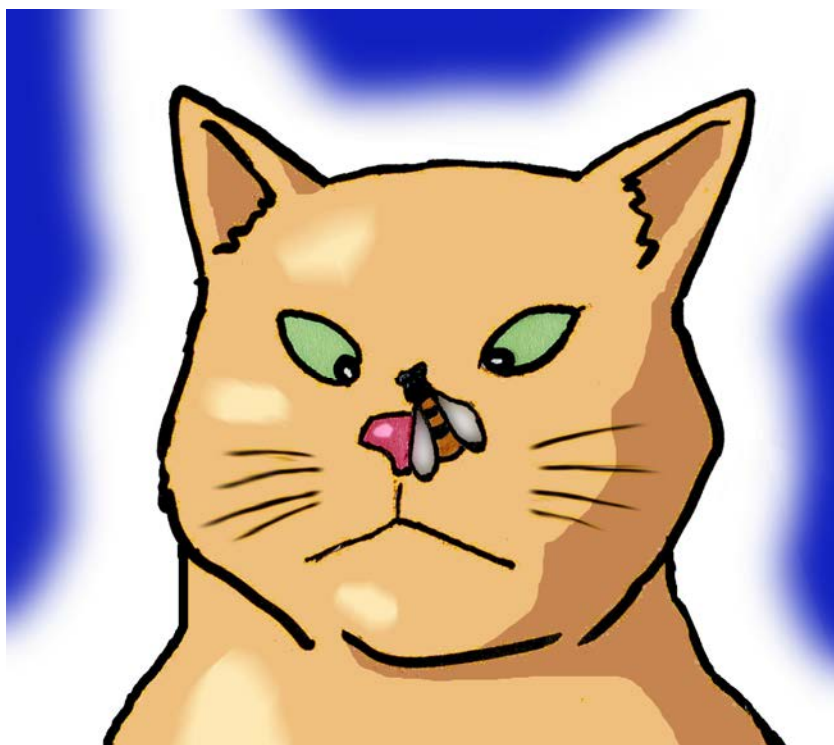
Now you have your breakfast. It's a big bowl of crunchy cat biscuits. Pretend you are biting and crunching the hard cat biscuits. Clench your jaw as tight as you can as you crunch the biscuits up.



Feel the muscles in your face and neck get tighter and tighter the harder you clench your jaw. Then relax and have a rest - it's hard work eating these biscuits!

Now have another go - clench your jaw as tight as you can and imagine crunching the hard biscuits into pieces. And then finally let your face and neck relax - letting all the muscles go soft and floppy.

Now you've had your breakfast you are ready to go outside and have a wander. You are just about to go outside when a buzzing bee lands right on your nose. You don't want to swat him with your paw because he might sting you. You are going to have to wiggle him off.



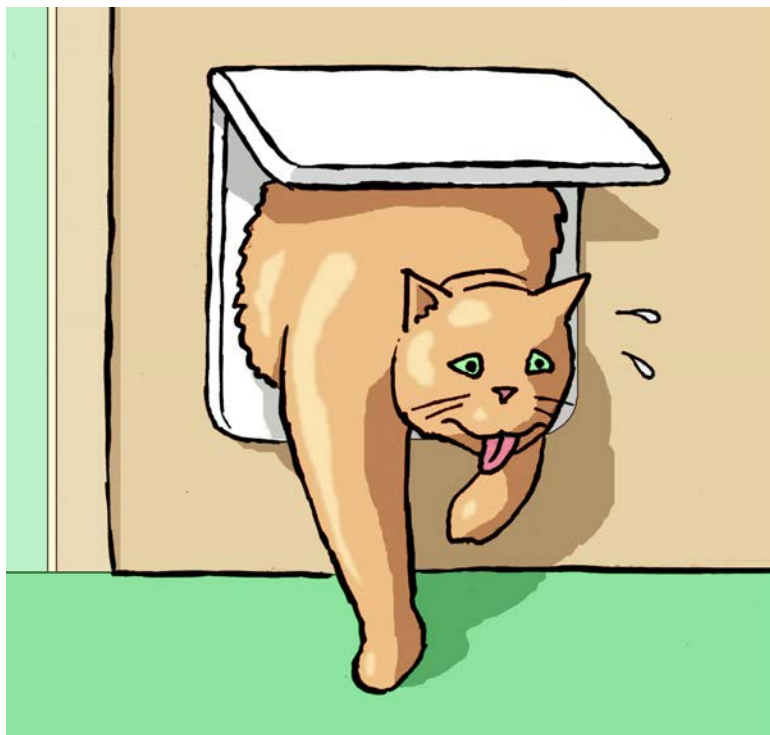
Scrunch your face up as hard as you can and wiggle your nose. Feel your cheeks and your lips get tighter as you screw your face up. After a few seconds, the bee buzzes off. Phew, that was close!

Oh dear, he has come right back again and landed on your nose. Your nose must smell like flowers!

Scrunch your face up again and wriggle your nose. Keep it scrunched up for a few seconds.

Finally the bee buzzes off and goes out of the window. Now you can relax your face - letting the muscles in your cheeks and lips feel nice and smooth once more.

Now you are finally ready to go outside too. You walk over to the cat flap in the door and push your head through. You try to get your tummy through but...oh dear....you might have eaten too much breakfast. Your tummy is too big to fit through the cat flap!



Pull your tummy in as tight as you can, feeling the muscles get tighter and tighter as you squeeze it in. Squeeze yourself slowly through the cat flap keeping your tummy tight and flat all the way through. Once you are outside you can relax your tummy again, letting all the muscles relax and go soft once more.

Take a walk up the garden now, enjoying the feeling of the warm sun on your back. It's lovely and peaceful in the garden. The only sound you can hear is the birds chirping quietly in the trees.

You see a nice soft patch of long grass further down the garden; the sun is shining brightly on this patch of grass, making it really warm. You go over to the patch of grass and decide you would like to have a little rest there.

First you would like to flatten it down a bit. Get your left foot and press firmly into the ground, and then get your right foot and press firmly into the ground. Press as hard as you can into the floor; squash it down as much as you can with each foot.

Feel the muscles tighten in your legs as you push down. Keep swapping feet and pushing down into the ground until you are happy that the grass is good and flat.

Now you can relax your legs and pretend that you are going to curl up on the lovely soft patch of grass. The sun is shining on you. You feel all warm and cosy. You feel a little sleepy; why not just have a little snooze in the sunshine for a while?



You start to relax all your muscles - you have exercised a lot of them this morning. You've tensed your hands, your arms, your neck and shoulders, your face, your jaw, your tummy and your legs and feet. As you lie in the sun feel all these parts of your body relax a little bit more. Listen to your breathing again as you start to relax even more.

Take a long breathe in through your nose and a long breathe out through your mouth, a long breathe in through your nose and a long breathe out through your mouth...in through your nose....and out through your mouth. Breathe in slowly....and breath out slowly, breath in slowly...and breathe out slowly. Breath in....and breath out, breath in....and breathe out. And with each breathe out you feel more and more relaxed like a sleeping cat just snoozing away in the sunshine.

Well done. Now you should be feeling really relaxed and comfortable. In a moment, you will open your eyes. As you go through each day, remember how good it feels to be relaxed like a cat. If you practice everyday, you will get better and better at relaxing and you will feel more and more relaxed each time.

Now, when you are ready to, you can open your eyes and you will feel nice and calm and relaxed, feeling good and ready to carry on with your day.

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