

MODEL EXERCISE FOR FALLING ASLEEP

Lie down and rest as comfortably as you can. Your eyes can be open or closed, it's up to you. Feel the way your bed and your body touch each other. I do not know what you are feeling – perhaps it's the warmth of the mattress – or perhaps a feeling of support. Maybe you feel the duvet over you or around you. Give yourself some time to feel what it is like to lie here in your bed with your duvet around you.

While in your bed, comforted by your duvet and mattress (and perhaps a cuddly toy), breathe deeply. Breathe deeply through your nose. Feel how the breath comes in through your nose, travels into your lungs and comes out through the mouth. (Keep an eye on the child and say “nice” or “good” or “well done” when you can see that the child is breathing deeply. Make sure that any adults present breathe in the same way, so that the child will be able to hear them breathing and feel supported).

While you take another deep breath, you can – if you have not already done so – close your eyes. Breathe deeply again. Feel yourself relaxing more and more.

Imagine, however you'd like, a small ball. Feel warm. Maybe it has a colour, maybe not. Imagine that the ball is rolling around and around. Around and around in gentle movements. Breathe deeply while imagining the ball. Maybe you see it, maybe you just feel it, either way is fine. However you imagine the ball is OK.

Now imagine that the ball is inside your body. It is a pleasant and nice ball. It moves softly around and around. Wherever the ball is inside your body feels calm and relaxed. Imagine the ball gently running around your head. Slowly. Slowly and pleasantly. Slowly and softly. Feel your head becoming calm and relaxed.

The ball rolls on. Out into your shoulders. You are already feeling warm, calm, and relaxed. The ball rolls on. Out into one arm. Out into the other arm. Through the upper body, into your abdomen, lower back, legs, knees, feet, all the way out to your toes. Wherever the ball is and wherever it has been feels more and more relaxed. The ball is a relaxation ball.

Now, breathe deeply into your entire body – feel yourself relax more and more.

Now, any way you choose, imagine a staircase. You choose how it looks, but it's a nice staircase. A fine staircase. A staircase you feel comfortable with. Maybe it is a specific colour, maybe it has a handrail. Perhaps it's short, perhaps it's long. Perhaps there are many steps, maybe a few. Whatever you see is fine. The stairs are cozy and comfortable.

EXERCISES

Now imagine that you are standing at the top of the stairs. Quietly begin to go down the stairs. One step at a time. Perhaps you stop and take stock of your feelings. The staircase is safe and comfortable. Breathe deeply and take another step. And another. Breathe deeply from your abdomen and feel yourself becoming more and more relaxed. And more and more relaxed. Step by step. You begin to feel tired. It spreads through your body as peace and tranquillity. Step by step, down the stairs.

All the way down the stairs ... third step ... fourth ... fifth ... sixth ... seventh ... eighth ... ninth ... tenth ...

Good night and sweet dreams ...

