

# Self-Control Strategies

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Paced Breathing

1. Time your breathing pace- Counting the seconds on the clock if possible, breathe in slowly for four seconds through your nose and out through your mouth. Looking at a clock has the added benefit of distracting the mind, further increasing the likelihood of quickly gaining control.
2. Add Two Seconds to your exhale- Counting to yourself as you inhale, breathe out for that same number of seconds plus 2 seconds, trying to push all the air out of your lungs.
3. Repeat the pattern- Repeat above, using the same number of inhales as exhales.

## Counting Backwards

1. Simply choose a number above 20 and count slowly backwards from there.
2. Stop counting once you feel more relaxed.

(You can also count backwards by twos or threes in order to make the task more challenging.)

## Pleasant Imagery Visualization

1. Close your eyes and imagine a peaceful scene. (The scene does not include drugs or alcohol.)
2. Describe the scene to yourself, identifying all the senses you are experiencing there. What do you see? Hear? Feel? Smell? Taste?

## Relaxation

1. Find a quiet space and sit comfortably with both feet flat on the floor.
2. Close your eyes and take at least three deep breaths.
3. Tighten each of your muscles, holding each muscle tightly for 10 seconds, and then release, in the following order:
  - a. Toes
  - b. Feet
  - c. Calves
  - d. Thighs
  - e. Stomach
  - f. Shoulders
  - g. Hands (making a fist)
  - h. Arms
  - i. Neck
  - j. Face
  - k. Top of the head
4. Relax all your muscles completely.
5. Take a minute and slowly breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

## Self-Talk

1. Identify risky thoughts likely to lead to substance abuse, and
2. Replace these risky thoughts with healthy self-talk that reduces the risk.

## Taking a Break

1. Decide if you are in a potentially risky situation.
2. If you are, leave the situation.
3. Try doing something else to distract yourself and get space.