

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Easy to Learn, Easy to do, only takes 15-20 minutes
- Helps you feel the difference between relaxed and tense muscles
- Calms the body – Reduces physical symptoms
- Use as a coping tool

1. Find a comfortable place to sit or lie down where you will not be disturbed.

2. Close your eyes.

3. Tense each muscle group for about 5 seconds, then relax for 10-20 seconds. Tense and relax each muscle group two times, in the order below. **Do not tense your muscles so hard that they hurt, and tense only lightly if you have an injury in that muscle area.**

1. Clench your left fist; relax.

2. Clench your right fist; relax.

3. Bend both hands back at the wrist to tense forearm muscles; relax.

4. Clench both fists, bend your arms and lift your hands toward your shoulders, tensing the muscles of your upper arms; relax.

5. Pull your shoulders up toward your ears; relax.

6. Wrinkle your forehead and brow; relax.

7. Close your eyes tightly; relax. (be cautious if wearing contact lenses).

8. Clench your teeth and jaw muscles; relax.

9. Press your lips together; relax.

10. Bring your head forward and pull your chin in toward your chest; relax.

11. Arch your back and stick out your chest and abdomen; relax.

12. Take a deep breath, filling your lungs completely, and hold it for 5 seconds; exhale and relax.

13. Tighten the muscles in your abdomen; relax.

14. Tighten the muscles in your lower back and buttocks; relax.

15. Stretch both legs out in front of you, pointing your toes; relax.

16. Tighten the muscles along your shins by flexing your feet and pointing your toes up toward the ceiling; relax.

4. After you have tensed and relaxed all the muscle groups, sit quietly for a few minutes with your eyes closed.

5. Practice relaxed breathing for a few minutes. Count back from 5 slowly, and transfer your awareness to your surroundings. Open your eyes. You should feel awake and relaxed. And remember, practice each day to get the most benefit.