



PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique used to release stress. It can relax the muscles and lower blood pressure, heart rate, and respiration.

Progressive muscle relaxation is the tensing and then relaxing of each muscle group of the body, one group at a time. Though this technique is simple, it may take some practice before it is 'mastered.'

Here's an example of a typical relaxation exercise:

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.

Remember to **breathe** slowly and deeply.

Tense up a group of muscles - tense hard but don't strain - and hold for about 5-10 seconds. **Don't** do anything that hurts; depending on your treatment, there may be groups of muscles you choose not to tense.

Release the tension from the muscles **all at once**. Stay relaxed for 10 - 20 seconds.

Some people prefer to count. For example:

Tense for count of 5

Release all at once

Rest for count of 10...or

Tense for count of 10

Release all at once

Rest for count of 20

Pay close attention to the feeling of relaxation when you release the contracted muscles.

When going through the muscle groups, some people start with the hands, others with the feet. You may do one side of the body (hand, arm, leg, foot) at a time or do both sides at the same time.

You may repeat relaxing and tensing muscle groups that have you have already done to relax them further.

Some people prefer to listen to a tape that guides you through progressive muscle relaxation. You may find this helpful, especially if you are feeling confused as to which muscle group to start with and what order to do them in.



Muscle Relaxation Muscle Groups

- Hands - Clench fists
- Right forearms and hands - Extend arm, elbow locked, and bend hand back at the wrist
- Upper right arm - Bend arms at elbows and flex biceps
- Forehead - wrinkle forehead into frown, tense, release, rest, and/or raise eyebrows
- Eyes - close eyes tightly, hold and release
- Mouth - press lips tightly together
- Jaw - open mouth wide and stick out tongue
- Buttocks - tense
- Abdomen
- Chest
- Back - arch back
- Neck and shoulders
- Thighs
- Lower legs and feet - Point toes toward shins
- Feet - Point toes and curl them under