



## Progressive muscle relaxation for stress relief

Progressive muscle relaxation involves a two-step process in which you slowly and gently tense then relax different parts of the body.

With regular practice, progressive muscle relaxation increases your awareness of tension in the body and the practice of relaxing your body at will. To enhance this exercise you can practice this outside or with your favorite calming music playing quietly.

A common way to practice this exercise is to start at the head and work down to the feet.

- To begin loosen clothing and sit or lie in a comfortable position
- Take 5-10 slow, deep breaths
- When you're ready, place your attention on your head and face. Notice any feeling or sensation in that area. Then tense the muscles starting at the top of your face, the scalp, eyebrows, and eyes. Hold for 5 seconds and release. Notice the feeling of relaxation as you release the tension in those muscles. Take another deep breath
- When you're ready move slowly down the muscle groups in your body, pausing to feel the relaxation and deep breath after each group.
- Continue this process through your face, neck, shoulders, right arm and hand, left arm and hand, chest, back, stomach, hips, buttocks, left thigh, right thigh, left calf, right calf, left foot, right foot.
- After completing the sequence with your whole body, take a few deep breaths and place your attention on your state of relaxation for a few minutes before returning to your day.

\*Check with your doctor before performing any exercise if you have a heart or other related medical condition