

Relaxation Techniques

Technique #2: Progress Muscle Relaxation

How can it help?

Progressive muscle relaxation is a deep relaxation technique that has been effectively used to *decrease stress and anxiety, relieve insomnia, and reduce symptoms of chronic pain*. Doctors have used progressive muscle relaxation in combination with standard therapies for symptom relief in a number of conditions, including *headaches, cancer pain, high blood pressure, and digestive disturbances*.

How can I do it?

To practice Progressive Muscle Relaxation, you will be isolating one muscle group at a time, tensing that area vigorously for several seconds, and then releasing that tension. The key is to notice what it feels like to tense and what it feels like to release tension in that area.



Step by step:

Find a peaceful place where you won't be disturbed for at least 10 minutes

Sit or lay comfortably

Close your eyes

Take in a slow, deep breath until your lungs are full

Hold the breath and tense the muscles in your toes and the arches of your feet

Exhale and relax the tension from your feet all at once. Let the muscles go totally loose and let the tension go completely

Notice the difference between tensing and relaxing.

Now repeat this process with other muscle groups, moving from your toes towards your head:

- Calves
- Thighs
- Buttocks
- Abdomen
- Back
- Shoulders
- Neck
- Biceps
- Forearms
- Hands
- Forehead (wrinkle up your forehead by bringing your eyebrows up as far as they go)
- Face (wrinkle your nose and close your eyes tightly)
- Lips (pucker your lips as hard as you can)
- Jaw (open your lips as wide as you can)
- Tongue (push your tongue to the roof of your mouth)

Practice focusing your attention on the muscle group you are working on

Notice when your mind wanders away from your body

Practice bringing your attention back when it wanders

Allow yourself to....

