



Bloom Counseling
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Relaxation Technique-Progressive Muscle Relaxation

It may help to have soothing music or sounds of nature playing while you use this technique. If you find your mind wandering, this is common at first, just notice that you are distracted and, in a non-judgmental way, return your focus to the task at hand. Like with most relaxation techniques, practicing consistently is the key.

In progressive muscle relaxation exercises, you tense up a particular muscle group and then relax them.

General steps

- 1) Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit or lay down
- 2) Close your eyes and take a few slow deep breaths to help you relax
- 3) Tense the muscle group described, making sure you can feel the tension but not so much that you feel pain or discomfort.
- 4) Keep the muscles tensed for approximately 5 seconds.
- 5) Relax the muscles, keeping them relaxed for approximately 10 seconds, noticing the sensation.

Relaxation sequence

- 1) Right hand and forearm- Make a fist with your right hand.
- 2) Right upper arm- Bring your right forearm up to you shoulder to "make a muscle".
- 3) Left hand and forearm- Repeat as for the right hand and forearm.
- 4) Left upper arm- Repeat as for the right upper arm.
- 5) Forehead- Raise your eyebrows as high as they will go as though you were surprised by something.
- 6) Eyes and cheeks- Squeeze your eyes shut.
- 7) Mouth and jaw- Open your mouth as wide as you can, as you might when you're yawning.
- 8) Shoulders- Tense the muscles in your shoulders as you bring your shoulders up towards your ears.
- 9) Shoulder blades/ back- Push your shoulder blades back, trying to almost touch them together so that your chest is pushed forward.
- 10) Chest and stomach- Breathe in deeply, filling up your lungs and chest with air.
- 11) Hips and buttocks- Squeeze your buttock muscles.
- 13) Right upper leg- Tighten your right thigh.
- 14) Right lower leg- Do this slowly to avoid cramps. Pull your toes towards you to stretch the calf muscle.
- 15) Right foot- Curl your toes downwards.
- 16) Left upper leg- Repeat as for the right upper leg.
- 17) Left lower leg- Repeat as for the right lower leg
- 18) Left foot- Repeat as for right foot.

For more examples and information about stress management and relaxation techniques, visit www.bloomcounselingdc.com/get-started