



## Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

PMR works on the premise that physical relaxation leads to mental relaxation. It involves contracting a muscle group for ~10 seconds, noticing the tension in those muscles and then releasing the tension bringing awareness to what the relaxed muscle feels like. This process is repeated by moving through the muscle groups in a specific order, either starting with the hands and traveling towards the feet or vice versa.

To practice PMR, wear loose, comfortable clothing and go to an area where you will not be disturbed. Sit or lie down comfortable. During PMR, contract muscles until you feel tension but not pain. If you feel significant pain, let it go and just breathe deeply.

---

### HANDS

- While sitting quietly and comfortably, slowly inhale and exhale and close your eyes as you do so.
- Bend your right hand back at the wrist and briefly hold the tension.
- Now relax.
- Now do the same thing with the left hand. Hold the tension briefly.
- Now relax.
- This time tighten both hands into fists and hold the tension. Feel it spread up the arms towards the elbows.
- Now relax.

### ARMS

- Now bend both arms at the elbows and raise your hands up towards your shoulders.
- Tighten up the muscles in the biceps. Hold it.
- Now relax.

The above exercises have used the major muscles in the arms and started them relaxing. If you don't move them around, they will continue to relax becoming more and more relaxed, and you can forget about them.

**Now that we have relaxed the arms, we will continue down the body.**

## FACE

- Next, turn your attention to your face. For your forehead raise your eyebrows up as far as you can and hold the tension.
- Now relax.
- For your eyes, squeeze the eyelids tightly together. Hold the tension.
- Now relax.
- For your jaw, bite down gently and clamp your teeth together. Feel the tension along the jaw.
- Now relax.

## NECK/SHOULDERS

### For your neck:

- Bend your head forward as if trying to touch your chin to your chest.
- Feel the tension along the back of the neck.
- Now relax.

### For your shoulders:

- Tense the muscles in your shoulders as you bring your shoulders up towards your ears.
- Next, push your shoulder blades back, trying to almost touch them together, so that your chest is pushed forward.
- Then breathe in deeply, filling up your lungs and chest with air.

## HIPS

- For your hips and buttocks, squeeze your buttock muscles tightly.
- Now relax.

## LEGS

- For your right upper leg, tighten your right thigh, and keep the tension for a few seconds, then relax.
- For your right lower leg, pull your toes towards you to stretch the calf muscle.
- Do this slowly and carefully to avoid cramps.
- For your right foot, curl your toes downwards.
- Repeat the above 3 steps for the left leg.