

# Progressive muscle relaxation

This is a relaxation technique which involves stretching different muscles in turn and then relaxing them to release tension from the body and relax your mind.

Find a warm, quiet place with no distractions. Get completely comfortable, either sitting or lying down. Close your eyes and begin by focusing on your breathing; breathing slowly and steadily. If you have pain in certain muscles, or if there are muscles that you find it difficult to focus on, spend more time on relaxing other parts. Aim to learn the difference between tight and relaxed muscles. Focus on muscles changing from tight to relaxed.

## 1 Step 1: Tense the muscles in your body

This step is essentially the same regardless of which muscle group you are targeting. First, focus on the target muscle group. Next, take a slow, deep breath and squeeze the muscles as hard as you can for about 5 seconds. It is easy to accidentally tense other surrounding muscles, so try to ONLY tense the muscles you are targeting. Isolating muscle groups gets easier with practice.

## 2 Step 2: Release tension

Notice how your muscles feel when you relax them. After about 5 seconds, let all the tightness flow out of the tensed muscles. Exhale as you do this step. You should feel the muscles become loose and limp, as the tension flows out. It is important to very deliberately focus on and notice the difference between the tension and relaxation. This is the most important part of the whole exercise.

Remain in this relaxed state for about 15 seconds, and then move on to the next muscle group. Repeat the tension-relaxation steps

### Instructions for each muscle



### Remember:

Step 1: Hold each muscle tension for **5 seconds**

Step 2: Pause for **15 seconds** and breathe in deeply between each muscle tension