

Day 2: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a **two-step process** in which you systematically tense and relax different muscle groups in your body.

With regular practice, Progressive Muscle Relaxation provides you with an intimate familiarity of what tension – and relaxation – feels like in different parts of the body. The awareness will help to counteract initial signs of muscular tension that may accompany stress. As your body relaxes, so will your mind.

The Practice of Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Prior to practicing Progressive Muscle Relaxation, consult with your doctor if you have a history of muscle spasms, back problems, or other serious injuries that may be aggravated by tensing muscles.

Step 1	Loosen your clothing, remove your shoes, and assume a comfortable position.
Step 2	Take a few minutes to relax – breathe in and out in slow, deep breaths.
Step 3	When relaxed, shift your attention to your right foot. Focus on the way it feels.
Step 4	Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot. Squeeze tightly and hold for 10 seconds.
Step 5	Relax your right foot. Focus on the tension flowing away and how your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.
Step 6	Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.
Step 7	When ready, shift your attention to your left foot. Follow the same sequence of muscle tension and release.
Step 8	Move slowly up through your body – contract and relax the muscle groups as you go.

Note: Try not to tense muscles other than those intended. This may take practice.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Sequence

1. Right foot*
2. Left foot
3. Right calf
4. Left calf
5. Right thigh
6. Left thigh
7. Hips and buttocks
8. Stomach
9. Chest
10. Back
11. Right arm and hand
12. Left arm and hand
13. Neck and shoulders
14. Face

Action Step: Practice muscle relaxation today – Feet, calves, thighs, hips, and buttocks!

Resource: www.helpguide.org