

DISTRESS OR DE-STRESS

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a two-step process whereby you experience physical relaxation through attention to the absence of tension. Through a sequence of tensing and releasing different muscle groups, you build an awareness of tension that accompanies stress, providing you with the conscious ability to lower your stress levels. This is an easy and effective technique creating a deep state of relaxation physically, mentally, and emotionally.



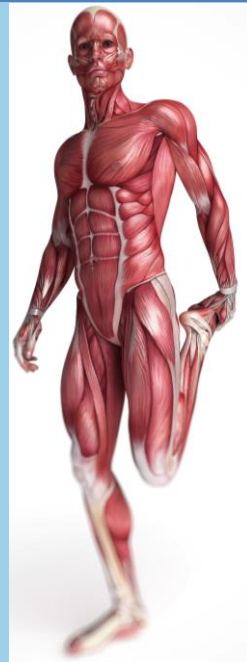
TEACH YOUR MUSCLES HOW TO RELAX

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

- Wear loose comfortable clothing, remove your shoes, and find a comfortable position.
- Settle into what you know as a relaxed state and slowly breathe in and out as deeply as you can.
- When relaxed, focus on how your right foot feels. Is it sore or tense? Does one area feel lighter than another?
- Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot. Squeeze tightly and hold for 10 seconds.
- Then relax your right foot. Focus on the release of the tension and how your foot feels allowing it to be limp and loose.
- Rest in this state for just a moment continuing with slow deep breaths.
- When ready, move your attention to your left foot. Repeat the process of tense and release.
- Move slowly upward through your body. Contract and relax the muscle as you go while trying to keep the rest of your muscles relaxed.

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: Get started today! Start small and focus on the lower body: feet, calves, thighs, hips, and buttocks!

Source: www.helpguide.org