



Using Progressive Muscle Relaxation to Control Stress and Anxiety and Release Tension From Your Muscles

Sit or lie down on your back and stretch out comfortably. You'll work from your toes to your head concentrating on each part of your body. Systematically tense your muscles for 5-10 seconds as you breathe in. Then relax your muscles for 20-30 seconds as you breathe out. Relax in between and repeat for each muscle group.

MUSCLE GROUPS:

Feet: Curl your toes and tense the soles of your feet.

Lower Legs: Point your toes toward your face. Point your toes away and curl downward.

Thighs: Clench your thigh muscles together.

Hips and Buttocks: Press your buttocks together tightly.

Stomach: Suck your belly button in toward your spine so your muscles form a tight knot.

Chest: Take a deep breath and expand your chest muscles.

Shoulders: Shrug them and raise them toward your ears.

Back: Arch your back up and away from the floor or chair. Squeeze your shoulder blades together.

Hands: Clench your hands into fists.

Wrists and Forearms: Extend and bend your hands back at the wrist.

Biceps and Upper Arms: Clench your hands into fists, bend your arms at the elbows and flex your biceps.

Neck: Press your chin to your chest. Press the back of your head against the floor or chair.

Mouth: Press your lips together tightly.

Cheeks and Jaws: Clench your jaw. Smile as widely as you can.

Nose and Eyes: Wrinkle your nose. Close your eyes as tightly as you can.

Forehead: Wrinkle it into a deep frown.

Learn More:

[Effectiveness of Progressive Muscle Relaxation \(National Library of Medicine\)](#)

[Benefits of Progressive Muscle Relaxation and How to Do It \(Healthline\)](#)

[Progressive Muscle Relaxation for Sleep \(Harvard Health\)](#)

[Progressive Muscle Relaxation \(U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs\)](#)