

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Assume a comfortable position. Starting at your toes and working your way up to your head, tense and relax each muscle group as follows:

Toes - Curl your toes as tightly as you can for five seconds. Relax.

Feet - Bend your ankles toward your body as far as you can for five seconds. Relax.

Thighs - Tighten your thigh muscles by pressing your legs together as tightly as you can for five seconds. Relax.

Hips and buttocks - Tighten your hip and buttock muscles for five seconds. Relax.

Stomach - Tighten your stomach muscles for five seconds. Relax.

Back - Arch your back off the bed or chair for five seconds. Relax.

Shoulders - Shrug your shoulders up to your ears for five seconds. Relax.

Upper arms - Bend your elbows. Tense your biceps for five seconds. Relax. Feel the tension leave your arms.

Forearms - Extend your arms out against an invisible wall and push forward with your hands for five seconds. Relax.

Hands - Clench your fists tightly for five seconds. Relax.

Lips, cheeks and jaw - Draw the centers of your mouth back and grimace for five seconds. Relax. Feel the warmth and calmness in your face.

Eyes and nose - Close your eyes as tightly as you can for five seconds. Relax.

Forehead - Wrinkle your forehead, try to make your eyebrows touch your hairline for five seconds. Relax.

Take a deep breath in through your nose, then exhale slowly out of your mouth.

Repeat this sequence two or three times. Each time you do an exercise remind yourself to relax, let all the tension go, and stay calm. This will bring down your heart rate and help your body resume restful sleep.

