

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

A simple exercise that will help you relax in 10 easy steps

For each muscle group, tense for 10 seconds and release, taking a few deep breaths as you notice that muscle group relax, before moving on to the next muscle group. Skip areas that cause pain when tensing.

1. Sit in a comfortable position, with eyes closed. Take a few deep breaths, expanding your belly as you breathe air in and contracting it as you exhale.
2. Begin at the top of your body, and go down. Start with your head, tensing your facial muscles, squeezing your eyes shut, puckering your mouth, and clenching your jaw. Hold, then release and breathe.
3. Tense as you lift your shoulders toward your ears, hold, then release and breathe.
4. Make a fist with your right hand, tighten the muscles in your lower and upper arm, hold, then release. Breathe in and out. Repeat with left hand.
5. Concentrate on your back, squeezing your shoulder blades together. Hold, then release. Breathe in and out.
6. Suck in your stomach, hold, then release. Breathe in and out.
7. Clench your buttocks, hold, then release. Breathe in and out.
8. Tighten your right hamstring, hold, then release. Breathe in and out. Repeat with left hamstring.
9. Flex your right calf, hold, then release. Breathe in and out. Repeat with left calf.
10. Tighten toes on your right foot, hold, then release. Breathe in and out. Repeat with left foot.

Adapted from: <http://www.arthritistoday.org/arthritis-treatment/natural-and-alternative-treatments/meditation-and-relaxation/progressive-muscle-relaxation.php>