

## Progressive muscular relaxation (PMR) script

Pick a time of the day when you won't be distracted. As you begin to practice PMR try sitting in a comfortable, upright position rather than in your bed. If practicing in bed it can be easy to fall asleep, and you will miss out on opportunities to practice. However, once you have really got the hang of muscle relaxation, using PMR to help you fall asleep can be useful.

Pick a place that is comfortable and quiet, turn all electronics off or silence notifications. Make sure that you are not too hot or cold, and plan to avoid interruptions for the next 20 minutes or so.

As you practice PMR you will be asked to tense or tighten your muscles just enough so that you can feel it. If you feel pain, then stop – you are tensing too hard.

### Tense and relax your muscles

Tense your muscles for a count of 5 seconds only. Don't keep your muscles tense for too long. When you relax your muscles, be aware of releasing the tension and enjoy the feeling of relaxation. Make each group of muscles tense and then relax two times before you go onto the next muscle group.

### Focus on your breathing

Now just sit back and make yourself as comfortable as possible. Breathe very gently in and out... your breathing should be very smooth... As you exhale, try to let go of whatever is going on in your mind or body.... breathing in through the nose... and as you breathe out... gently letting the eyes close now.

The mind may be busy, especially if it has been stressed out... just allow the mind to do its own thing... not trying to think about it... not trying to stop the thoughts... allow the mind to do its own thing as... you bring all of your attention into your breathing...

Let everything else go for now and place your attention on your breathing. Focus on various muscle groups in your body... to become aware of the sensations or feelings in the particular muscle groups...

With each particular muscle group, spend a few minutes focusing your attention on those muscles. Tense that muscle group and hold the tension for a few seconds... to be aware of the tension and tightness... then slowly release the tension. Sequentially work through this process with each muscle group. If you notice your mind wandering this is perfectly normal... gently bring your attention back to your breath.

Now, focus your attention on your breathing... smoothly in and out... in and out... and mentally see or say the word 'relax' each time you breathe out... as you exhale you say 'relax'.

### Focus on different muscle groups

Now the first group of muscles you focus on are the muscles in your hands and arms... both your hands and both your arms. Just spend a few moments getting your attention on to that group of muscles. As you become aware of the physical sensations which you feel in your hands and arms... are they warm or cold... do they feel heavy or light... bring your focus now to each of your fingers... one by one.

Tense the muscles in both your hands and both your arms, making the muscles feel firm and tight... OK now, tense... add the tension to your hands and arms to the point that it feels noticeably tense... notice how tight the muscles feel... hold the tension for a moment... and now relax... just slowly let the tension go... bit by bit... gently releasing the tension as you slowly exhale. As you breathe out say 'relax'... very good. Keep letting the tension go... step by step. Feel the tension falling away... draining away... notice how your hands and arms are feeling more and more relaxed... relax them completely... bringing awareness to how it feels to let the tension go... your arms and your hands feel pleasantly relaxed and comfortable... your breathing is smooth and rhythmic... inhale and exhale... relax.

Now focus on the sensations in the muscles in your face... focus all of your attention on your facial muscles... the muscles in your forehead... around your eyes... your cheeks... nose... mouth and jaw... become aware of the sensations in those muscles... keep breathing... in and out and saying the word 'relax' with each exhale... as you focus on the muscles in your face... become aware of the sensations.

Now tense all of the muscles in your face... frown at the forehead, squint up the muscles around your eyes, tighten the muscles in your cheeks, around your mouth, tongue and jaw... make the muscles feel firm and tight.

OK, now tense... notice how tight the muscles feel in your face... hold the tension for a moment... and now relax. Slowly let the tension go and as you breathe out... say the word 'relax'... as you keep letting the tension go. Relax the muscles in your forehead, around your eyes, cheeks, mouth, jaw... your facial muscles are feeling more and more relaxed. Relax them completely, noticing what it feels like to let the tension go... just let the muscles go loose and relaxed... loose and relaxed... all of the muscles in your face feel pleasantly relaxed and comfortable. Inhale and exhale with the word 'relax' with each breath out.

Now focus on the sensations in the muscles in your neck and throat. Focus all of your attention on your neck and throat... become aware of the sensations in those muscles... inhale slowly and exhale slowly as you say the word 'relax'. Keep focusing on the muscles in your neck and throat... become aware of the sensations.

Tense all of the muscles in your neck and throat by pulling your chin down towards your chest but at the same time setting up a resistance and not allowing your chin and chest to touch. Now tense... add the tension to all of the muscles in your neck and throat... notice how tight the muscles in your neck and throat feel... hold the tension for a moment... and now relax. Slowly let the tension go, bit by bit, let a little tension go each time you breathe out. As you breathe out begin again to say the word 'relax'. Keep letting the tension go... feel the tension falling away... draining away... relax the muscles in your neck and throat. The muscles are feeling more and more relaxed... relax them completely. Notice how it feels to let the tension go... all of the muscles in your neck and throat feel pleasantly relaxed and comfortable... and your breathing is still smooth and rhythmic. Inhale and exhale... gently in and out... with the word 'relax' with each exhale. If your mind is wandering, gently bring back your attention to your breath.

Now let's move on to the next muscle group... focus on the sensations in the muscles in your shoulders, chest, back and stomach... focus all of your attention on these muscles. Become aware of the sensations in those muscles ... just keep breathing smoothly and rhythmically in and out and saying the word 'relax' with each exhale. Focussing on the muscles in your shoulders, chest, back, and stomach become aware of the sensations.

Tense all of the muscles in your shoulders, chest, back and stomach. You can do this by taking a deep breath in... holding it... pulling your shoulder blades back, and tightening your stomach muscles. Now, tense... breathe in... hold it... add the tension to all of the muscles in your shoulders, chest, back and stomach... feel the tension... notice how tight the muscles feel. Hold the tension for a moment... and now relax. Slowly let the tension go... let a little tension go each time you breathe out. As you breathe out, begin again to say the word 'relax'... keep letting the tension go, step by step, feel the tension falling away... draining away... let them drop. Lower your shoulder blades, relax the muscles in your chest, back and stomach, the muscles are feeling more and more relaxed. Relax them completely... focus on how it feels to let the tension go.

The muscles are now loose and relaxed... all of the muscles feel pleasantly relaxed and comfortable. Your breathing is still smooth and rhythmic... inhale and exhale... gently in and out. Make sure you are breathing from your diaphragm... pushing your stomach out with each breath in... and you say the word 'relax' with each exhale.

And now let's move on to the next muscle group... bring your focus on the sensations in the muscles in both your legs and both your feet. Focus all of your attention on these muscles, the muscles in your upper legs, knees, lower legs and both your feet... become aware of the sensations in those muscles. Just keep breathing smoothly and rhythmically in and out... and keep saying the word 'relax' with each exhale. Become aware of the muscles in both your legs and feet... focus on the sensations in the tips of your toes.

In a moment, for the last time, tense the muscles in both your legs and your feet. You can do this by stretching your legs out and pointing your toes up towards the ceiling or down towards the floor ... tightening all of the muscles from your upper legs down through to your toes.

OK, now tense... add the tension to all of the muscles in your legs and feet to the point that they feel noticeably tense. Notice how tight the muscles in your legs and feet feel... hold the tension for a moment... and now relax... just slowly let the tension go... bit by bit... let a little tension go each time you breathe out. As you breathe out begin again to say the word 'relax'... keep letting the tension go... feel the tension falling away, draining away... relax the muscles in your legs and your feet. Your legs and feet are feeling more and more relaxed... relax them completely... focus on what it feels like to let the tension go... just let the muscles go loose and relaxed. All of the muscles in your legs and feet feel pleasantly relaxed and comfortable... your breathing is still smooth and rhythmic... inhale and exhale... saying the word 'relax' with each exhale. Notice how your whole body feels pleasantly relaxed and comfortable.

Now scan over your body to see if any tension has crept back in... and if you notice any signs of tension that is okay, just try to focus on letting go. Notice your hands and arms, notice the muscles in your face, your forehead, around your eyes, cheeks, mouth and jaw... notice the muscles in your neck and throat... notice the muscles in your shoulders, chest, back and stomach, and finally notice the muscles in both your legs and feet. Your whole body feels pleasantly relaxed and comfortable, at peace and at ease. Gently inhale and exhale... and now spend a few quiet moments enjoying the sensations of being relaxed.

Allow several minutes of relaxation in silence...

Now count backwards from 5 through to 1, as you do, begin to slowly open your eyes, and on the count of 1 your eyes will be wide open. You will remain feeling pleasantly relaxed and comfortable and also alert and ready to continue on with the day.

Count 5-4-3-2-1... open your eyes.... notice that you feel relaxed and alert.

Enjoy your day!