

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is a form of relaxation training that can teach you how to achieve deep physical relaxation. You will tense groups of muscles, then release the tension and pay close attention to feelings of relaxation. Relaxation should be enjoyable, so if any part of the exercise is too difficult skip over it and move on to the next part. If you have any injuries be careful not to stress that part of your body.

Preparation

Choose a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. You can relax while lying down on a firm bed or couch, or sitting comfortably in a chair with your head well-supported. Loosen any tight clothing and make sure that you will be comfortably warm.

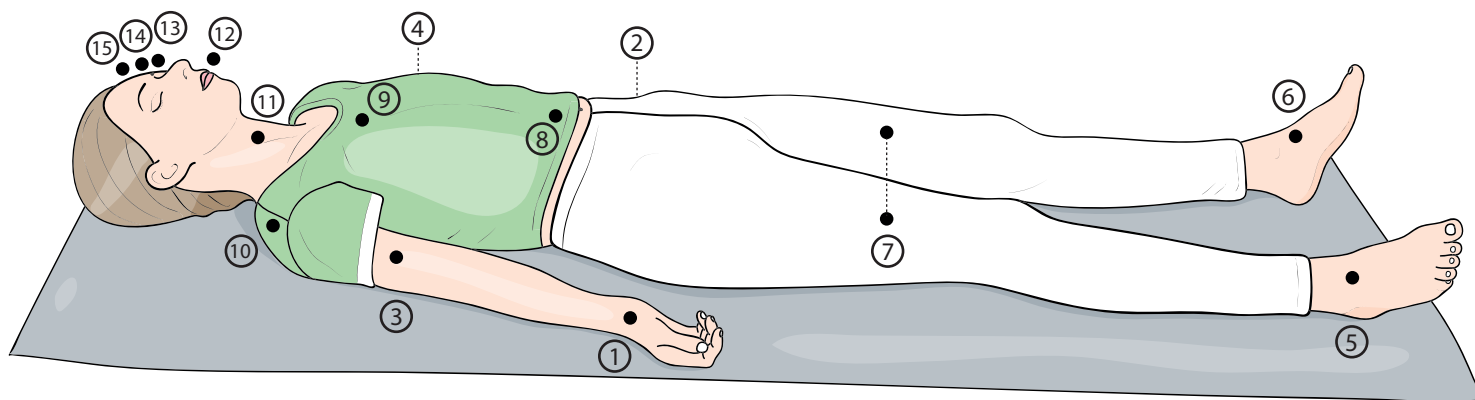
Instructions

For each group of muscles you should:

1. Focus your attention on that muscle group.
2. Tense those muscles as instructed.
3. Maintain the tension for about 5 to 7 seconds.
4. Stay focused on that muscle group for about 20 to 30 seconds before moving on, noticing feelings of relaxation.

Go through the sequence three times:

1. **Tense & relax:** tense the muscles, maintain the tension for few moments, then relax.
2. **Lightly tense & relax:** tense the muscles only very slightly, then relax.
3. **Relax only:** just pay attention to each muscle group and decide to relax it.



Recommended sequence

1. **Right hand and lower arm** (clench your fist and tense the lower arm)
2. **Left hand and lower arm**
3. **Right upper arm** (bring your hand to your shoulder and tense your biceps)
4. **Left upper arm**
5. **Right lower leg and foot** (point your toe and gently tense the calf muscle)
6. **Left lower leg and foot**
7. **Both thighs** (press your knees and thighs tightly together)
8. **Abdomen** (pull your abdominal muscles in tightly)
9. **Chest** (take a deep breath and hold it in)
10. **Shoulders and back** (hunch your shoulders or pull them towards your ears)
11. **Neck and throat** (push your head backwards against the surface on which you are resting)
12. **Lips** (press them tightly together without clenching your teeth)
13. **Eyes** (closing them tightly)
14. **Lower forehead** (frown and pull your eyebrows together)
15. **Upper forehead** (wrinkle your forehead)