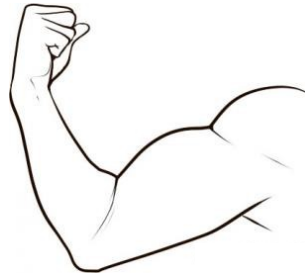


# PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Progressive Muscle Relaxation involves tensing and relaxing different muscles or muscle groups throughout the body in a systematic way, conditioning the body and the mind to **distinguish tension from relaxation**. Anxiety-provoking thoughts and events produce muscle tension in the body. Deep muscle relaxation reduces physiological tension



**CAUTION:** Be careful when tensing the muscles in your neck and spine, especially if you have previously injured these areas. Also use caution with feet and toes to avoid cramping.

## Technique

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) can be practiced lying down or sitting in a chair. Each muscle or muscle group is tensed for 5 to 7 seconds, and then relaxed for 20 to 30 seconds. If a particular muscle is difficult to relax, you can repeat the procedure of tensing and releasing it up to 5 times. Once this procedure has been mastered you can do a shorthand version in which whole muscle groups are tensed and relaxed simultaneously – such as: all the facial muscles together, or: hands, arms, and shoulders, or: legs, feet and toes.

## Procedure:

Begin by taking a few deep breaths from the abdomen. Tense, hold, and relax the following body parts and notice the contrast between a tensed state and a relaxed state. Inhale as you tense, exhale as you relax and let go.

Tense right hand (make a fist)...hold...relax. Tense left hand (make a fist)...hold...relax. Tense both hands...hold...relax. Tense right hand and arm and pull forearm toward body...hold...relax. Tense left hand and arm and pull forearm toward body...hold...relax. Tense both hands and arms and pull forearms toward body...hold...relax. Tense shoulders by raising toward ears...hold...relax. Raise eyebrows and tighten forehead and scalp...hold...relax. Close eyes tight and wrinkle facial muscles...hold...relax. Tense jaw (gently clench teeth) and push tongue to the roof of mouth...hold...relax. Pull stomach muscles in...hold...relax. Tense right leg, flexing thigh and calf muscles, point toes toward face and then away...hold...relax. Tense left leg, flexing thigh and calf muscles, point toes toward face and then away...hold...relax. Tense both legs...hold...relax. Tense entire body...hold...relax.

Notice the sensations of relaxation in your muscles. It may feel like you have just received a massage. Allow your body to relax for a few minutes before getting up and resuming your normal activities.

## More Information

Guide to Psychology: <http://www.guidetopsychology.com/pmr.htm>  
Inner Health Studio video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFwCKKa--18>