

## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

One of the body's reactions to fear and anxiety is muscle tension. This can result in feeling "tense", or having muscle aches and pains, as well as feeling exhausted. This form of relaxation is designed to reduce muscle tension.

Set aside the time and place for relaxation, slow down your breathing and give yourself permission to relax. When you are ready to begin, tense the muscle group described. Make sure you can feel the tension, but not so much that you feel a great deal of pain. It may be helpful to say like "Relax" as you relax the muscle.'

1. Take three deep abdominal breaths, exhaling slowly each time, imagining the tension draining out of your body.
2. Clench your **fists**. Hold for 10 seconds, before releasing and feeling the tension drain out of your body (breathe deeply 3 times between each group of muscles).
3. Tighten your biceps and triceps showing off your muscles like a **body\_builder**. Hold, then relax.
4. Tighten the muscles in the back of your neck by pulling your **head\_way\_back**, as if you were going to touch your head to your back. Relax.
5. Tighten your shoulders as if you are going to **touch\_your\_ears**. Relax.
6. Try to touch your elbows in your back as if they were **wings**. Relax.  
Tighten your lower back by arching it up. Hug yourself, and relax.
7. Tighten your **stomach** muscles by sucking your stomach in. Hold, relax.
8. Tighten your **buttocks** by pulling them together. Hold, then relax.
9. Squeeze the quadriceps, which are the muscles in your **thighs**. Hold, then relax.
10. Tighten your **calf** muscles by lifting your heels. Hold, and relax.
11. Tighten your **feet** by curling them downwards, then upwards. Hold, then relax.
12. Tense the muscles in your **forehead** by raising your eyebrows as high as you can. Hold, then relax.
13. Tense the muscles around your **eyes** by clenching your eyelids shut. Hold, then relax. Imagine sensations of deep relaxation spreading all over your eyes.
14. Tighten your **jaws** by opening your mouth so widely that you stretch the muscles around the hinges of your jaw. Hold, then relax.

Now imagine a **wave** of relaxation spreading over your body and **enjoy** the sensation of being relaxed.