



Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is another effective and widely used strategy for stress relief. It involves a two-step process in which you systematically tense and relax different muscle groups in the body.

With regular practice, progressive muscle relaxation gives you an intimate familiarity with what tension—as well as complete relaxation—feels like in different parts of the body.

This awareness helps you spot and counteract the first signs of the muscular tension that accompanies stress. And as your body relaxes, so will your mind. You can combine deep breathing with progressive muscle relaxation for an additional level of relief from stress.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Loosen your clothing, take off your shoes, and get comfortable.

- Take a few minutes to relax, breathing in and out in slow, deep breaths.
- When you're relaxed and ready to start, shift your attention to your right foot. Focus on the way it feels.
- Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.
- Relax your right foot.
- Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.
- Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.
- When you're ready, shift your attention to your left foot.

Follow the same tension and release sequence. Move slowly up through your body

— legs, abdomen, back, neck, face — contracting and relaxing the muscle groups as you go.

Relaxation Sequence Start at the feet and work their way up to the face.

- Right foot
- Left foot
- Right calf
- Left calf
- Right thigh
- Left thigh
- Hips and buttocks
- Stomach
- Chest
- Back
- Right arm and hand
- Left arm and hand
- Neck and shoulders
- Face

