

How To Reduce Tension with Progressive Muscle Relaxation

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Progressive Muscle Relaxation ([PMR](#))¹ is a great technique for reducing overall body tension. As you practice tensing and relaxing all the muscle groups in your body, you can move to a shortened procedure, [Deep Muscle Relaxation](#)² where you rapidly relax your whole body. As you reduce the tension you carry in your body, your whole being will feel less stress and you will enjoy increased physical and emotional health. Here's how to get started:

Here's How:

1. After finding a quiet place and several free minutes to practice progressive muscle relaxation, sit or lie down and make yourself comfortable.

2. Begin by tensing all the muscles in your face. Make a tight grimace, close your eyes as tightly as possible, clench your teeth, even move your ears up if you can. Hold this for the count of eight as you inhale.

3. Now exhale and relax completely. Let your face go completely lax, as though you were sleeping. Feel the tension seep from your facial muscles, and enjoy the feeling.

4. Next, completely tense your neck and shoulders, again inhaling and counting to eight. Then exhale and relax.

5. Continue down your body, repeating the procedure with the following muscle groups:

- chest
- abdomen
- entire right arm
- right forearm and hand (making a fist)
- right hand
- entire left arm
- left forearm and hand (again, making a fist)
- left hand
- buttocks
- entire right leg
- lower right leg and foot
- right foot
- entire left leg
- lower left leg and foot
- left foot

6. for the shortened version, which includes just four main muscle groups:

- face
- neck, shoulders and arms
- abdomen and chest
- buttocks, legs and feet

Quickly focusing on each group one after the other, with practice you can relax your body like 'liquid relaxation' poured on your head and it flowed down and completely covered you. You can use progressive muscle relaxation to quickly de-stress any time.

