

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This relaxation technique has strong research support as a tool for managing anxiety. Practice each day for 5-10 minutes to become familiar with the skill. Sit upright in a chair for this activity. Each tension position should be held for five seconds while breathing in, then relax your body while breathing out. Repeat two times then move on to the next body part. You should feel tension, but you should *not* feel discomfort or pain. If you do, stop immediately and consult with your doctor. Feel free to skip body parts or complete the exercises in a different order than what is listed here.

Feet: Lift up toes while keeping heels on the floor.

Calves: Lift up heels while keeping toes on the floor.

Knees and Thighs: Extend legs and flex thigh muscle.

Abdomen: Pull stomach in tightly to flex core muscles.

Hands: Make a fist and hold tightly.

Forearms: With forearms facing up, pull hands in to make a fist.

Biceps: Pull your fist in near your shoulder and hold the position.

Shoulders: Pull shoulders together toward your back.

Lower Face: Pull lip corners into a tight smile while keeping your eyes closed.

Forehead: Raise your eyebrows up with your eyes open.