



MANAGING SYMPTOMS

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

One method of reducing muscle tension and relieving physical symptoms of stress or overwhelm is a technique called Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR). Follow the steps below to complete the exercise.

- ❧ Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit, then close your eyes and let your body go loose. Take about 5 slow, deep breaths before you begin.
- ❧ Start by applying muscle tension to a specific part of the body. This step is essentially the same regardless of which muscle group you are targeting. First, focus on the target muscle group. Next, take a slow, deep breath and squeeze the muscles as hard as you can for about 5 seconds. It is important to really feel the tension in the muscles.
- ❧ After about 5 seconds, let all the tightness flow out of the tensed muscles. Breathe out as you do this step. You should feel the muscles become loose and limp, as the tension flows out. Deliberately focus on and notice the difference between the tension and relaxation.
- ❧ Remain in this relaxed state for about 15 seconds, then move on to the next muscle group. Repeat the tension-relaxation steps. After completing all of the muscle groups, take some time to enjoy the deep state of relaxation.

RECOMMENDED MUSCLE GROUP SEQUENCE

- ☞ Right foot
- ☞ Right lower leg and foot
- ☞ Entire right leg
- ☞ Left foot
- ☞ Left lower leg and foot
- ☞ Entire left leg
- ☞ Right hand
- ☞ Right forearm and hand
- ☞ Entire right arm
- ☞ Left hand
- ☞ Left forearm and hand
- ☞ Entire left arm
- ☞ Abdomen
- ☞ Chest
- ☞ Neck and shoulders
- ☞ Face

**Take care not to hurt yourself while tensing your muscles.
You should never feel intense or shooting pain while completing this exercise.**