

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) involves tensing specific muscle groups as you breathe in. On the breath out, these muscles are encouraged to relax and let go of tension.

As you explore PMR, you become more attuned to how tension and relaxation are experienced in your body.

Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique that you can explore from the comfort of your home.

You can practice PMR while seated in a chair, or while lying down in bed or on a soft surface. Explore PMR for about 10 to 15 minutes in a quiet space. Turn notifications off, dim the lights and wear comfortable clothes.

Listen to your body as you explore this progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Stop the exercise if you experience any pain, strain or discomfort.

As you explore muscular tension, gradually contract each muscle group until you feel tension without causing strain to your muscles. Hold this tension for 5 seconds.

On your exhalation, relax the muscles that were in a state of tension for 10 seconds before moving on to the next muscle group.

Speak to a physician before participating in this exercise to see if it is recommended for you and your unique situation.

Find a comfortable seat of your choosing, either lying down or sitting on a chair.

Allow your arms to rest at your sides, and either soften your gaze or close your eyes.

Observe the flow of your breath. Notice which parts of your body expand on your breath in, and which parts contract on your breath out.

(brief pause)

Observe how your inhalations can create tension in your body. Notice how your exhalations can create feelings of relaxation and ease.

(brief pause)

Bring your awareness to your feet. As you breathe in through your nose, gradually curl your toes in. Curl the arches of your feet. Observe how it feels to contract the muscles in the soles of your feet. Hold this for a moment.

(5 second pause)

Slowly release your breath through your nose or mouth as you gradually relax your feet. Observe how it feels to release tension from your feet.

(10 second pause)

Direct your attention to your lower legs, focusing on your calf muscles. As you breathe in, create tension in your calves by pointing your toes away from your body. Gently squeeze your calves as you hold this state of tension for a moment.

(5 second pause)

Release your breath through your nose or mouth as you relax your feet and calves completely. Visualize tension washing off of your calves, flowing onto the surface beneath you.

(10 second pause)

Bring your awareness to your thighs. If you are resting on your back, you can create muscular tension by straightening through your legs. As you do this, your kneecaps will lift upwards. To tense your thigh muscles from a seated position, you can squeeze your legs together.

Take a slow breath in through your nose as you gradually tense your thigh muscles. Notice what it feels like to create tension in your quadriceps and hamstrings. Hold this state of tension for a moment.

(5 second pause)

Breathe out through your nose or mouth as you slowly soften and relax your thigh muscles. Sense how your hamstrings sink deeper into the surface beneath you.

(10 second pause)

Moving onto the buttocks and pelvis. Breathe in through your nose as you gradually tighten the muscles in your buttocks. Keep your attention on your pelvis and gluteal muscles. Hold this for a moment.

(5 second pause)

As you breathe out, slowly release this state of tension. Allow your pelvis and the rest of your lower body to grow heavy. Observe whether you feel more open, relaxed and at ease in your mind and body.

(10 second pause)

Direct your attention to your abdominal muscles. As you breathe in through your nose, begin to contract your abdominal muscles. Pretend that you are doing a sit up to help engage your abdominal wall. Notice how your lower back responds to this contraction. Hold this for a moment.

(5 second pause)

Release this state of tension on your breath out. Allow your belly and lower back to relax and soften. Breathe in as you normally would, and breathe out. Observe whether you can feel your breath in your belly as you breathe in and out.

(10 second pause)

Bring your awareness to your chest. As you breathe in, fill your lungs with air. Notice the expansion of your ribcage, mid-back and upper back. Hold this state of tension for a moment.

(5 second pause)

Slowly release your breath out through your mouth, emptying all the air out. Breathe in as you normally would, and breathe out. Feel the weight of your back settling against the back of your chair or the surface beneath you. Observe the flow of your breath for a moment.

(10 second pause)

Direct your attention to your upper arms, focusing on your biceps and triceps. As you breathe in through your nose, slowly bend at your elbows as you lift your hands towards your shoulders. Squeeze your biceps and triceps. Hold here for a moment.

(5 second pause)

As you breathe out, slowly release your arms back to your sides. Feel the tension melt away as your upper arm muscles soften and release.

(10 second pause)

Bring your attention to your forearms and hands. On your breath in, curl your fingers inward to make fists. Sense the tension in your forearms. Maybe you can feel this tension rippling up towards your biceps. Hold here for a moment.

(5 second pause)

Slowly breathe out through your nose or your mouth as you relax your hands and forearms. Soften through your palms and each finger. Allow your arms and hands to grow heavy. Observe the temperature of your arms and hands. Do they feel warmer?

(10 second pause)

Direct your attention to your shoulders and shoulder blades. As you breathe in, slowly bring your shoulders up towards your ears. Observe the compression at the sides of your neck. Hold this state of tension for a moment.

(5 second pause)

On your breath out, slowly lower your shoulders away from your ears. Notice whether your shoulders are sitting lower than before. Is there more space between your ears and shoulders? Sense how your shoulder blades connect with your chair or the surface beneath you.

(10 second pause)

Bring your awareness to your neck. On your breath in, gently press the back of your head into your chair or against the surface beneath you. Notice your neck muscles turning on. Hold here for a moment.

(5 second pause)

Release this state of tension as you breathe out. Observe your neck muscles, front and back, soften as you release muscular effort.

(10 second pause)

Moving up to your jaw. As you breathe in through your nose, smile. Explore an exaggerated smile, showing your teeth. Hold here for a brief moment.

(5 second pause)

Explore a soft exhale as you let go of your smile. Relax your jaw, lips and the inside of your mouth. Create some space in your mouth by parting your teeth and lips.

(10 second pause)

As you breathe in, tighten the muscles of your face by squeezing your eyes shut. Observe how your cheeks and nose respond to this movement. Hold this state of tension for a moment.

(5 second pause)

On your breath out, relax your fascial muscles. Allow your nose, cheeks, eyes, brow bone, forehead and scalp to soften. Observe the softening and release of your facial muscles.

(10 second pause)

Allow your breath to flow in and out with ease. As you breathe in and out, visualize yourself floating on water or sitting on a cloud. There is nothing for you to do here, except be.

(30 second pause)

You can remain here for as long as time allows. Each cycle of breath invites more ease and relaxation into your mind and body.

Before ending this progressive muscle relaxation exercise, I invite you to bring some movement back to your body.

Begin to wiggle your fingers and your toes. Place the tip of your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Draw some slow circles with your tongue.

(10 second pause)

Explore stillness. Breathe in through your nose. Breathe out through your nose or your mouth.

In your own time, open your eyes. If you are on your back, bend at your knees. Lower your knees to one side as you roll onto your side. Using your top hand, slowly press yourself up to a seat on your mat.

Reorient yourself to your space. Name three things you see. Two things you hear. One thing you feel, such as your heart beat.

Breathe in through your nose. Breathe out through your mouth.

Carry this feeling of warmth, calm, support and relaxation with you throughout the rest of your day.

Return to this practice often for preventative care.

Disclaimer: Rachel from Yoga with Rachel, highly recommends that you consult with your physician prior to participating in this exercise program. Please follow any safety precautions as indicated by your physician. Participating in any fitness regime involves the possibility of physical injury. Listen to your body. Stop the exercise if you are experiencing any pain or discomfort. If you decide to engage in this exercise or exercise program, you agree to do so at your own risk. By voluntarily participating in these activities, you assume all risk of injury to yourself.