



Relaxation

This is a simple, step-by-step method of progressive muscle relaxation. Allow yourself 15-20 minutes to practice this procedure once or twice every day. Try to find a quiet room where you will not be disturbed and that is comfortable for you. You may either sit or lie down.

If sitting, try to have a comfortable armchair where your head and arms can be supported. Many people prefer the sitting position for this procedure because of the tendency to fall asleep when lying down. Once you have become comfortable, close your eyes and think about a pleasant, quiet place where you have been or is easy for you to imagine (some people like to think about being on the beach and listening to the waves or being on a mountain).

As you are going through the relaxation procedure and you find yourself thinking about problems at work or things you have to do, gently ease them away by returning to thinking about your more relaxing thought.

Another method of relaxation consists of tensing and relaxing certain muscles of your body. **AS YOU PRACTICE THIS, YOU WILL BECOME AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING TENSE AND FEELING RELAXED.** Allow yourself 30 seconds to 1 minute after first sitting down before beginning the relaxation procedure. Keep your eyes closed and give your body a chance to feel relaxed. This is the procedure to follow:

Tense each muscle group for about 5-10 seconds before releasing it. Then concentrate on the relaxation you feel for 30 seconds to 1 minute before proceeding to the next muscle group so that you may become aware of the difference in feeling. Keep your breathing normal during the procedure.

Completely Relax For 30 Seconds To A Minute Between Each Step.

- 1 **HANDS:** Clench each fist separately and feel the tension; then do both together.
- 2 **LOWER ARMS:** Make a fist and bend each arm up at the elbow with your right arm, then repeat with your left arm.
- 3 **UPPER ARMS:** Stretch out your right arm in front of you like you are reaching for something, then relax it. Repeat with left arm.
- 4 **FACIAL MUSCLES:** Squinch up your face.
- 5 **CLENCH YOUR TEETH.**
- 6 **PURSE YOUR LIPS.**
- 7 **PUSH YOUR TONGUE TO THE ROOF OF YOUR MOUTH.**



- 8 LIFT YOUR EYEBROWS with your eyes still closed.
- 9 NECK: Bend head back then forward so chin touches chest.
- 10 SHOULDERS: Hunch your shoulders way up like you are trying to touch your ear lobes.
- 11 CHEST: Tense chest muscles by taking a deep breath and holding it for 4-5 seconds.
- 12 BACK: Arch your back.
- 13 ABDOMEN: Tense stomach muscles by bearing down.
- 14 THIGHS AND BUTTOCKS: If sitting, tense thighs and buttocks by pressing heels of your feet into floor. If lying down, do this by pinching hip muscles together.
- 15 LOWER LEGS: Point toes toward your head then away from your head.
- 16 TOES: Curl toes up.

After you have gone through the whole procedure, let yourself become aware of how you are feeling by checking over your whole body and feeling the relaxation that is there. Your breathing and pulse rate may now be slower than before you started. Before opening your eyes, take about two minutes and let yourself remain in the same relaxed position while you now start to let your mind wander to things you will be doing during the day. When you feel ready to open your eyes, count backward from 4, stretch and stand up slowly. You should now feel relaxed and refreshed.