

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

What is Progressive Muscle Relaxation? Contracting and Relaxing muscles to release tension. It is a gradual process to help a person's body relax

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### Steps for PMR

**Step One:** Get comfortable. Lie on the floor or the bed and add pillows/ blankets where necessary. Either lay your arms out or gently rest your hands on your stomach. Only start the technique when you feel comfortable. Make necessary adjustments.

**Step Two:** Let your mind go blank and take a deep breath.

**Step Three:** Tense muscles in your left foot by curling and crunching them. Release the tension leaving your foot to feel relaxed, floppy, and warm.

**Step Four:** Tense the calf muscles of the left leg. Relax and let go. If your leg still does not feel relaxed repeat the step. (Tense leg until it is difficult to hold then let go.)

**Step Five:** Follow the same technique on the left thigh. Let your leg tense and then sink into the bed/floor when it is relaxed.

**Step Six:** Repeat the process with the right leg.

**Step Seven:** Continue moving up your body. Next, clench your buttocks and then relax. Then pull in your stomach muscles and relax them. (Repeat if necessary)

**Step Eight:** Breathe deeply, evenly, and steadily. Sigh the breath away. Imagine you are sighing out all the tension.

**Step Nine:** Move to your left hand. Make a tight fist. Then let go. Tighten the muscles in your arm and then relax them. Continue with your right arm. Repeat the steps if the arms do not feel relaxed. (Your arms should feel numb and heavy).

**Step Ten:** Hunch your shoulders up to your ears and then let them sink back. Repeat this step until you feel completely relaxed. We hold much of our tension in our shoulders.

**Step Eleven:** Gently rock your head from side to side and feel your neck loosen and relax. Breathe in deeply. Enjoy the peace and quiet.

**Step Twelve:** It is time to relax your face muscles (the most difficult area to relax.) Yawn widely and let go. Purse your lips together like you are pouting and then relax. Frown like you are angry and then relax. To relax your forehead, raise your eyebrows and then let them down (relaxing).

**Step Thirteen:** Your whole body should be relaxed at this point. Repeat in your mind that you are relaxed and peaceful. Part of being relaxed is also feeling warm.

**Step Fourteen:** Rest relaxed for about fifteen minutes. Let yourself gradually come out of your state of relaxation. Stretch and give yourself a shake before reentering the stresses of the world.

**Hints/Tips:** Let your feet fall outwards, relax your knees, let your body sink into the bed or ground, breathe deeply and evenly, make sure your shoulders sink into the ground away from your ears, unclench your teeth, spread your arms out with your palms facing upwards, when you close your eyes relax your face and neck, and make sure you feel warm enough (it helps in relaxation). Remember you can always repeat the tensing and relaxing technique if you do not feel the area just focused on is relaxed enough. You can even use some of these techniques when you are sitting in a chair. Another suggestion is that if your back is feeling tense try bending your knees up with your feet flat on the floor. For some people, resting their knees on a chair reduces the strain on their back.