



## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

To truly address stress, it's important to be able to recognize and tend to the physical expression of stress in the body. One way to do this is through progressive muscle relaxation. As you try this exercise, focus on feelings within your body as well as on relaxation and breathing in order to bring calm to your physical and emotional self.

When you start to feel stressed or lose connection with your body, this exercise is a way to bring the focus back to your physical self and relax your entire body relatively quickly. You can either go through every muscle in your body or focus on specific areas that need attention.

Start by getting into a comfortable position. This exercise works great lying down, but it can also be done in a sitting position or even while standing. Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so. If at any point during the exercise you feel pain or discomfort, stop immediately. As you work through each body part, remember to take deep breaths in between.

### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Bring your focus to your toes and begin by tensing them, picturing them as you do so. Now, slowly relax them and notice how it feels when you do so. Next, move to your feet. Tense the muscles in the tops and bottoms of your feet and hold it for several seconds. Then, relax.

Continue working your way up your body, starting with your feet and legs, doing the same muscle tensing and relaxation. Continue this exercise until you've made your way all the way up to your face and head.

Once you have gone all the way through your body, notice how you feel. If you'd like, you can go back through certain muscle groups again.