

Progressive Relaxation

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Progressive relaxation is a short and easy exercise to help you relax and restore your energy.

Getting Started

Find a relaxing position. You may sit down or lie on your back. Uncross your arms and legs.

Let your eyes gently close. If you prefer, you can keep your eyes open as you focus on one spot in front of you.

Bring your attention to your breathing. Be aware of your breath as it comes in and out of your nose or mouth. Notice as your chest and belly move out with each breath in, and then in with each breath out.

As you breathe in, imagine a gentle, peaceful wave of relaxation flowing through your body. You can imagine this gentle wave of relaxation moving through your body in any way that is most comfortable for you. Some imagine it as light, water or a peaceful feeling.

The gentle wave can help soften places you hold tension. Give yourself permission to breathe out the tension, letting go of tightness in your muscles as you relax.

When your mind wanders, gently bring it back to your breathing.

Relax From Your Head to Your Feet

- As you breathe in, imagine a wave of gentle relaxation beginning at the top of your head.
- As you breathe out, imagine this wave flows over your scalp, through your head and face. Let your jaws soften and relax.
- Breathe in and breathe out as you focus on your neck and shoulders. Imagine the muscles in your neck and shoulders can soften and relax.
- Breathe in. As you breathe out, imagine the relaxing wave moving through each arm, all the way down to your hands. Your hands may feel heavier as they relax.
- Breathe in. With your next breath out, imagine the wave of relaxation rolling gently and peacefully down your spine. Let all of your back muscles relax and soften.
- Continue to be aware of your breathing and imagine the wave flows even more easily each time you breathe out.
- Let the wave of relaxation flow through your pelvic area and hips into your upper legs and thighs.
- Breathe in. As you breathe out, let the wave move into your calves, then your feet. You may notice your feet becoming heavier.

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- Take another breath in and let it out. Imagine any remaining stress flowing easily and gently out the bottoms of your feet.
- Breathe in. With your next breath out, let the wave help your whole body relax and soften, giving each muscle and body part permission to relax. Notice how your whole body feels as you breathe in and breathe out, relaxing and letting go as you relax.

Take a moment to observe the quiet feeling you have created. With practice, relaxation will become easier. Find ways to add progressive relaxation into your day.

Whom to Call With Questions

Talk with your health care provider if you have questions.