

# A BRIEF GUIDE TO PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION



Progressive relaxation is a relaxation technique composed of systematically tensing and relaxing muscles throughout the body.

**Studies have shown that progressive relaxation can lower overall stress levels and increase feelings of well-being.** You can lower the level of stress you experience each day by spending 10 minutes tensing and relaxing your muscles.

**Follow these four steps for progressive relaxation:**

**Find a quiet place to sit or lie down comfortably.**

A bed is ideal. A recliner would be the next best choice, but any comfortable chair will do. You'll need 10-15 minutes to complete the technique. Ensure you won't be

**Start at your left calf and tense those muscle for five seconds.**

Tense hard enough that you can feel it but avoid tensing so strongly that you create muscle cramps or pain.

**Now relax those same muscles.**

As you relax, exhale, and allow all the tension to flow out of that body part. Notice the difference between a tense muscle and one that's relaxed. Enjoy the relaxed feeling for 10-15 seconds before moving on to other body parts.

### Move on to other parts of the body.

Systematically move from your feet up to your head on both sides of your body, as shown:

- ✓ Calves > Thighs > Buttocks > Abdominals
- ✓ Hands > Forearms > Upper Arms > Shoulders

Repeat the entire process at least twice each day. Morning and evening are the logical times.

**Over time, you'll be able to notice when a body part is feeling tense during the day.**

That's a signal that you're stressed. Tense that muscle and relax it. You can even perform this action at your desk.

Progressive relaxation can be very effective when performed regularly. An audio program can be helpful as you learn the technique. Begin today and enjoy the benefits of progressive relaxation.

### INSTANT CALM

When you are feeling stressed, anxious or feel a panic attack coming on this is great way to rebalance yourself and come back to feeling safe.

**Take time to  
relax,  
Connect  
with nature  
Keep in  
touch with  
what is  
really  
important**

**Your Peace  
of Mind**



Here are some exercises to instantly calm yourself when you find yourself re-acting.

- Remove yourself from the source of your reaction if you can.
- Take a deep breath in to the count of three.
- Breathe all the way out to the count of three.
- Do this until you feel slightly dizzy.

Try All or one of the following .... :

Become aware of your bum on the seat. Feel the softness/firmness/texture of the seat below you. Become aware of the support of the seat...and notice as your body becomes heavy and sinks into that support...

Lean back and feel the support of the seat behind you. Lean right into it, melt into it.

Now become aware of the soles of your feet. Become aware of whatever is touching your soles – your shoes, the floor...Become aware of the firmness/softness/texture of that.

Notice how your body moves as you breathe. Don't tell a story about it, just notice it..

Become aware of the sounds around you...just hear the sounds. DO NOT listen, because that is doing. Simply hear.

Notice how things inside of you have become calm, have become still..

**DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU ESCALATE** – try each of these techniques and find which one does it for you – bum on seat, soles of feet, breathing or hearing.

***IF you cannot remove yourself from the source of your reaction***

*Even when things are going on around you, you can simply put your awareness on the soles of your feet...feel the shoes below your feet – **FOCUS on the texture/firmness/softness. See if you can get some awareness of the texture of the floor beneath your shoes. FOCUS all your attention on feeling the ground beneath your feet. Block out thoughts and sounds of everything else.***

BY moving your thoughts into feelings, you will shift the anxiety.

We can only experience one emotion at a time....

**SHIFT** what you are **FEELING** to **CHOOSE** your Mood or state