

Progressive Muscle Relaxation



What is the strategy?

- By starting with one part of your body and stretching or tensing and then releasing each muscle group in your body, you teach your body how to be more relaxed.

Step-by-step instructions:

1. Find a comfortable place to sit or lay down.
2. Close your eyes or let your gaze rest softly.
3. Starting with the muscles in your feet, tense them up, hold for a second or two and then release them, and relax your feet. Experience the relaxed feeling in your feet for a few seconds before moving on.
4. Move through your body: Tense or Stretch – Hold – Release and feel the relaxation for a few seconds in each of these muscles:
 - Calves
 - Thighs
 - Buttocks
 - Abdomen
 - Shoulders
 - Arms (stretch them out)
 - Hands (stretch out through your fingertips, then release)
 - Face (don't forget to rest your neck and head into the chair, or the surface you are laying on)

5. Notice that you have relaxed your whole body and stay here for a few moments, or longer if you have the time.
6. Practice this every day and your body will learn to become more and more relaxed!

How can I use this strategy with my family?

- Teach your partner, your kids and family. Everyone can use this strategy!

What are the benefits?

- Being relaxed feels good and prevents things like headaches and back aches.
- Having a relaxed body can help your mind to relax and feel a little calmer.
- When your body and mind are more relaxed it is easier to cope with stressful situations when they come up.