

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

Progressive muscle relaxation is a mindfulness tool used to bring awareness to your body and release tension one area at a time. Tension builds in the body when we are stressed or anxious. Progressive muscle relaxation directs your attention to each part of the body where you hold tension and helps release the stress from those areas.

We will use progressive muscle relaxation to visualize each part of your body while actively tensing and releasing the muscles. Every time you tense a body part you inhale, and every time you relax that body part you exhale slowly. You can use this tool to work on steadying your breath, to connect to your body, and to relax when you are stressed or anxious. A good time to use this tool is when you are lying in bed at night preparing for sleep, or when you start to feel particularly anxious throughout your day.

Begin by sitting tall, feeling your seat in the chair and your feet on the floor. If it feels safe to do so, close your eyes, or gently soften your gaze.

Bring your attention to your scalp. Picture the skin stretching across your skull. You might find a tingling sensation. Take a deep breath in and imagine sending your exhalation to the area of your scalp. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to your face. Inhale and tense the muscles in your forehead, wrinkling your brow and flaring your nostrils. Imagine sending the breath to your forehead and nose as your exhale. *Relax more.*

On an inhalation, squeeze your eyes shut very tight and hold for a moment before exhaling. *Relax more.*

On an inhalation, purse your lips and tense your jaw. Hold your breath for one second at the top of the inhalation, then exhale and release. *Relax more.*

Now bring your awareness to your neck and throat. As you inhale, tighten all the muscles in your neck and feel your throat constrict. Hold your breath for one second at the top of the inhalation, then exhale and release. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to your sternum. Imagine the skin that stretches across your collarbones as you actively send a deep breath to this area of your body. Inhale, hold, and exhale. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to your shoulders. As you tighten and tense your shoulders pull them all the way up to your ears. Take a deep inhale and hold at the height of the physical tension, then slowly exhale and feel your shoulders melt away from your ears. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to your arms. Without using your hands, tense your entire arm on an inhale and hold the breath for one second before exhaling and releasing the tense muscles. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to your hands. On an inhale, tighten your hands into fists, hold your breath and the tension for one second, then exhale and release. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to your abdomen. Imagine all the organs inside your abdomen as you tense your abdominal muscles. Feel everything constrict as you inhale and hold for one second, then exhale and release. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to your back. Starting with the upper back and the muscles between your shoulder blades, take a deep breath in and tense only the muscles in your upper back. Hold your breath at the top for one second, then exhale. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to the muscles in the middle of your back. Inhale and try to tighten just the mid-back muscles, hold for one second, and then exhale and release. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to your lower back and glutes. As you tense the lower back and glutes, inhale and send your breath to the area holding tension, then exhale and release. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to the tops of your legs. Tense both the thighs and the hamstrings as you inhale, hold at the top for one second, then exhale and release. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to your calves and shins. Tense the muscles in your lower leg as you inhale, then send the exhale to this area of your body as you release the tension. *Relax more.*

Bring your awareness to your feet. Scrunch your feet until they are very tense on an inhale, hold for one second, and then exhale and release. *Relax more.*

Now that we have worked our way through the body, take a moment to sit still and breathe naturally. Notice areas of tension that are still there and areas of the body that have relaxed during this practice. Take a deep breath, filling your whole body with as much air as you can. Hold that breath at the top for one second, then slowly exhale and feel your body *relax more.*

When you are ready, you may gently open your eyes.