

## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

First, build up the tension in the **lower arms**, by making fists with your hands and pulling your fists up by bending the wrists. Feel the tension through the lower arms, wrists, fingers, knuckles, and hands. Focus on the tension... (PAUSE 5 sec)

Now release the tension. Let your hands and lower arms relax onto the chair or bed beside you. Focus your attention on the relaxing sensations in your hands and arms. Feel the release from tension as you relax the muscles fully, feel it get warm... (PAUSE 10 sec)

Now build up the tension in the **upper arms** by pulling the arms back and in toward your sides. Feel the tension in the back of the arms and radiating towards the shoulders and into the back. Focus on the tension. Hold this tension... (PAUSE 5 sec)

Now, release the arms and let them relax – almost feeling heavy at your sides. Notice the difference between the prior feelings of tension and the new feelings of relaxation. Your arms might feel heavy, warm, and relaxed... (PAUSE 10 sec)

Now bring your attention to your **lower legs**. Build up the tension by flexing your feet and pulling your toes toward your upper body. Feel the tension as it spreads through your feet, ankles, shins, and calves. Hold this tension... (PAUSE 5 sec)

And release all of the tension in your lower legs. Let your legs relax onto the chair or bed. Feel the difference in these muscles as they relax. Feel the release from tension, the sense of comfort, the heaviness of relaxation... (PAUSE 10 sec)

Build up the tension in your **upper legs and buttocks** by pressing your knees together and lifting the legs slightly off of the bed or chair. Focus on the tightness through the front of your thighs and buttocks. Hold this tension... (PAUSE 5 sec)

Now release all of the tension in your upper legs. Let your legs sink heavily into the chair or bed. Let all of the tension disappear as your legs sink heavier into the chair or bed. Focus on the feeling of relaxation and comfort... (PAUSE 10 sec)

Build up the tension in your abdomen by pulling your **abdomen** in toward your spine, very tightly. Feel the tightness and focus on this tension... (PAUSE 5 sec)

Now let the tension in the abdomen relax... Notice how smooth and calm your breathing has become. Feel the comfort of relaxation... (PAUSE 10 sec)

Build up the tension in your **chest** by taking in a deep breath and holding it. Your chest is expanded and the muscles are stretched around your chest. Feel the tension in your front and your back... (PAUSE 3-5 sec)

Now, slowly let the air escape and resume normal breathing, letting air flow in and out smoothly and easily. Feel the difference in sensations as the muscles relax, compared to those of tension... (PAUSE 10 sec)

Build up the tension in your **neck and shoulders** by pulling your shoulder blades back and up towards your ears. Feel the tension around your shoulders, radiating into your neck and back. Hold this tension... (PAUSE 5 sec)

Now release the tension. Let your shoulders drop down, sinking further and further until they are completely relaxed. Notice the difference in the previous feelings of tension and the new feelings of relaxation. Enjoy these feelings... (PAUSE 10 sec)

Build up the tension in your **mouth, jaw and throat** by clenching your teeth and turning the corners of your mouth back into a forced smile. Hold. Feel the tightness... (PAUSE 5 sec)

Now, release the tension. Let your jaw drop down and the muscles around your throat and jaw relax. Notice the difference between the feelings of tension and the feelings of relaxation... (PAUSE 10 sec)

Now, build up the tension around your **eyes and lower forehead**, by squeezing your eyes tightly shut and pulling your eyebrows down... hold this tension (PAUSE 5 sec)

Now release all the tension in your eyes and lower forehead. Let the tension disappear from around your eyes. Feel your forehead and eyes smooth. Feel the difference as the muscles relax... (PAUSE 10 sec)

Build up the tension in your **upper forehead and scalp** by raising your eyebrows as high as possible. Feel the wrinkling and pulling across the forehead and top of the head. Hold this tension... (PAUSE 5 sec)

Now release all the tension in your forehead, letting the eyebrows gently rest down. Focus on the sensations of relaxation... (PAUSE 10 sec)

Your whole body is feeling relaxed and calm. Scan your body for any last bits of tension and if you notice any, let that tension go. Enjoy the feelings of relaxation...

As I count from 1 to 5, feel yourself become more and more relaxed... 1 ... let all tension leave your body... 2 ... sinking further and further into relaxation... 3 ... feel more and more relaxed... 4 ... feel very relaxed... 5 ...deeply relaxed... (PAUSE 30 sec)

As you spend a few minutes in this relaxed state, think about your breathing. Feel the cool air as you breathe in and the warm air as you breathe out. Your breathing is smooth and regular. Every time you breathe out, think to yourself “relax... relax ... relax”... you are feeling comfortable and relaxed... (PAUSE 1-3 min)

*(Skip if going on to other relaxation exercises)*

Now, as I count from 5 to 1, feel yourself become more alert... 5, bringing your attention to this room... 4, feeling calm and relaxed... 3, start to wiggle your fingers and toes... 2, slowly start to move and stretch your muscles... 1, open your eyes, feeling refreshed and rejuvenated.