



PROGRESSIVE MUSCULAR RELAXATION PROCEDURE PROPER

There are two steps in the self-administered Progressive Muscle Relaxation procedure:

- Deliberately tensing muscle groups.
- Releasing the induced tension.

Step One: Tension - The process of applying tension to a muscle is essentially the same regardless of which muscle group you are using. First, focus your mind on the muscle group; for example, your right hand. Then inhale and simply squeeze the muscles as hard as you can and hold to the count of 5; in the example, this would involve making a tight fist with your hand.

It's important to really feel the tension. Done properly, the tension procedure will cause the muscles to start to shake, and you might feel some pain but don't over do it.

Step Two: Releasing the Tension- This is the best part because it is actually pleasurable. After the count to 5, just suddenly but gently let go. Let all the tightness and pain flow out of the muscles as you simultaneously exhale. In the example, this would be imagining tightness and pain flowing out of your hand through your fingertips as you exhale. Feel the muscles relax and become loose and limp, tension flowing away like water out of a faucet. Focus on and notice the difference between tension and relaxation.

Make sure to stay relaxed for about 15 seconds, and then repeat the tension-relaxation cycle. You'll probably notice more sensations the second time.

How Do I Do It?

Find a comfortable position, laying down or sitting and take a few slow deep breaths. Inhale and hold the breath while squeezing all the muscles in your face. Squint your eyes, purse your lips, scrunch your nose. Hold until you can't hold your breath any longer and slowly exhale and release the muscles.

Now inhale and squeeze your neck, stomach, arms, make fists and hold until you can't hold the breath any longer. Slowly exhale.

Now inhale and squeeze the muscles in your legs, buttocks, feet, curl your toes. When you can no longer hold the breath, slowly exhale.

Lay still with your eyes gently closed, and take a few deep breaths.