

# Relaxation Techniques

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When you practice deep relaxation, it is important to be in a quiet, warm place where you will not be disturbed, wear loose clothing, be either sitting or lying down, your arms by your sides and your legs uncrossed.

Do not try too hard as this can bring on tension but allow the relaxation to just happen without forcing it. In the beginning, some people try too hard and consequently they get more tense and panicky. This is perfectly normal and will pass as your body becomes accustomed to being properly relaxed. Follow the instructions but take things slowly.

You should practice this relaxation programme at least twice a day until you know it off by heart and are able to relax any set of muscles at any time.

Try to keep your mind focused on the word relax. Keep your breathing regular, shallow and relaxed. Don't hold your breath and, notice how as you breathe out, you relax a little more. Keep your eyes closed. Breathe in and out through your nose and each time you breathe out, relax a little more. Keep concentrating on the word relax.

**The following exercises demonstrate the difference between tension and relaxation:**

## **The muscles in your hands and forearms:**

You tense these muscles by clenching your fists as tightly as you can.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your fists.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your hands and forearms.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

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## **The muscles in your upper arms:**

You tense these muscles by bending your arms at the elbows and trying to touch your wrists to your shoulders.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your arms.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your upper arms.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

## **The muscles in the back of your arms:**

You tense these muscles by straightening your arms as hard as you can.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your fists.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in the back of your arms.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

## **The muscles in your shoulders:**

You tense these muscles by shrugging your shoulders tightly into your neck.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your fists.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your shoulders.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

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## **The muscles in your neck:**

You tense these muscles by pressing your head back as far as you can.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your neck.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your neck.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

## **The muscles in your forehead:**

You tense these muscles by raising your eyebrows as though enquiring.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your eyebrows.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your forehead
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

## **The muscles in your brows and eyelids:**

You tense these muscles by frowning and squeezing your eyes tightly shut.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your eyelids.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your brows and eyelids.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.



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## **The muscles in your jaw:**

You tense these muscles by clenching your teeth as hard as you can.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your jaw.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your jaw.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

## **The muscles in your tongue and throat:**

You tense these muscles by pushing your tongue against the roof of your mouth.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your tongue.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your tongue and throat.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

## **The muscles in your lips and face:**

You tense these muscles by pressing your lips together tightly.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your lips.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your lips and face.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

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## **The muscles in your chest:**

You tense these muscles by taking a deep breath and holding it.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your chest by breathing out.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your chest.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

## **The muscles in your stomach:**

You tense these muscles by making your stomach muscles hard as though expecting a punch.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your stomach.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your stomach.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

## **The muscles in your hips and lower back:**

You tense these muscles by arching your back and clenching your buttocks

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your hips and lower back.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your hips and lower back.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

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## The muscles in your legs and feet:

You tense these muscles by straightening your legs and pointing your toes down.

- Start now and count steadily to ten, notice the tension.
- Relax your legs and feet.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your legs and feet.
- Keep focusing on the word relax.

Now completely relax for **10-15 minutes** and let the feeling of relaxation spread throughout the whole of your body. Keep focusing on the word relax and enjoy that feeling of deep relaxation. Try and return to your daily activities keeping the body as relaxed as you can.