

## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION - SEVEN MUSCLE GROUPS

### Client Handout

Remember to use the slow breathing technique your therapist showed you in the session when practicing this relaxation technique. Remember also to allow yourself plenty of time to complete the relaxation procedure (suggested time 15-20 mins), and to ensure that there will be a minimum of distractions.

1. **Dominant arm** – With arm supported on arm of chair, while bending arm at the elbow, make a tight fist and press the elbow down and/or in.
2. **Non-dominant arm** – As above.
3. **Facial muscles** – Frown (or raise eyebrows), squint eyes, wrinkle up nose, clench teeth, and pull the corners of the mouth back.
4. **Neck** – Push neck down towards chest & up towards back simultaneously.
5. **Chest, shoulders, upper back & abdomen** – Take a deep breath & hold it. Pull shoulder blades back and together, at same time making stomach hard (pulling it in or pushing it out). Say “relax” to yourself as you exhale.
6. **Dominant thigh, calf and foot** – Point your toes & foot up and inward, and press down with your upper thigh. At the same time curl your toes and tense your calf by pushing down on your heel.
7. **Non-dominant thigh, calf and foot** – As above.

**Succession of events:** (for each muscle group, follow the following procedure)

1. Focus attention on the muscle group that you are about to tense.
2. Tense muscle group and hold tension for 5-7 secs.
3. “Relax” muscle group (saying “relax”) and experience the sense of relaxation that this produces. Compare this feeling of relaxation to the feeling of tension earlier.
4. Maintain attention on muscle group as it relaxes for about 30-40 secs. Focusing on the calming sensations that it produces.

### Enjoyment Period

Once you have tensed and released *each* muscle group twice, you are almost finished!

Allow yourself an *enjoyment period* of approximately two minutes to allow yourself to achieve the deepest level of relaxation that you can. During this time, it is helpful to imagine a pleasant and calming situation where you would feel safe and relaxed.

This works best if you use all your senses and imagine the scene in detail. When you have finished, remember not to move all at once, but slowly, starting with feet & legs, arms and hands, head & neck and finally open your eyes.

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