

MUSCLE TENSION AND RELAXATION

Find a comfortable place to relax, either sitting with your arms loose, or laying with your body relaxed, legs and feet uncrossed.

Hold each of these techniques for about 5 to 10 seconds unless indicated otherwise.

Do not do any techniques that may cause marked pain, particularly with previously injured areas.

- ➔ Tighten your hands into a fist with your thumbs outside and hold for a count of 5 to 10 seconds. Release and relax, feel the blood slowly flowing back into your hands and allow yourself to feel the relaxation in those muscles.
- ➔ Hold your hands out and stretch your fingers wide with all fingers stretching apart and hold. Release and allow your fingers and hands to relax.
- ➔ Put both arms out straight in front of you with your elbows locked then pull your fingertips back as if you trying to touch your forehead. Feel the tension in your forearms, and continue holding for 5 to 10 seconds, then release.
- ➔ Put both arms out straight with your elbows locked and bring your fingertips down as if to touch your elbows. Hold, release and relax.
- ➔ Put your arms out to your side with your elbows locked, then pull your fingertips up and back as if trying to touch your shoulders. Feel the tension all the way through your arms and along your neck as well as in your fingers and hands. Hold, then release, relaxing and letting your arms drift down to sit comfortably at your sides.

Continue breathing slowly and deeply and naturally and allow you body to relax with every breath in and every breath out.

- ➔ Put your hands on your shoulders and tense the muscles in your biceps and triceps like a body builder holding a pose. Release and relax.
- ➔ Put your hands on your shoulders and bring your elbows together in front to tense the muscles in your chest, your biceps and triceps. Hold and then release, letting your arms drop down to your sides.
- ➔ Lift your shoulders up to your ears. Hold, then release.
- ➔ Lift your shoulders up to your ears and rotate your shoulders back so your shoulder blades press together and your upper back becomes tense. Hold and release.
- ➔ Tense the muscles in your stomach and hold for only about 5 seconds before relaxing.
- ➔ Press your lower back into the chair you are sitting on or the bed that you are lying on. Hold that tension for only about 5 seconds and then release.
- ➔ Squish up the muscles in your feet. If they are inside shoes, hold them very tight inside your shoes. Then release and relax.

Muscle Tension + Relaxation

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- ➔ With your knees straight and locked, point your toes like a diver. Hold and then release.
- ➔ Lift your legs up so your knees are straight and bring your toes up as if to touch your knees with your knees locked. Hold and then release.
- ➔ Tense the muscles in your buttocks, hold and then release.
- ➔ Now tip your neck forward just until you feel tension in the back of your neck. Hold that position and let your head slowly float up to a resting position at the top of your shoulders.
- ➔ Turn your head to the right until you feel tension. Once you feel tension, hold that position and then release and let your head slowly drift back to the center. Now continue on to the left side until you feel tension. Hold and then release and let your head drift back to the center.
- ➔ Frown so that your forehead wrinkles to create a tension in your scalp and forehead. Hold and then release.
- ➔ Open your eyes wide to create tension around your eyes and in your forehead. Hold and then release.
- ➔ Squeeze your eyes tightly shut for a count of 3 seconds only, then release and relax.
- ➔ Squish up all the muscles in your face and try to move them around to stretch them and get all of the muscles active and working. Continue for 10 seconds and then relax and release those muscles.
- ➔ Close your teeth gently together but do not create any pressure on your teeth. Now press your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Hold and then relax.
- ➔ Put your teeth together once again and then push your tongue inside your mouth toward the front of your teeth again until you feel tension in your jaw (there should be no pressure down on your teeth). Hold for 10 seconds and then release and relax. When your jaw is relaxed, your mouth should be a little bit open.

Now that you have completed the entire relaxation exercise, allow your body to relax and your breathing to return to normal. Breathe slowly and deeply, allowing your breathing to relax yourself naturally. With every breath in, allow yourself to become more relaxed, and with every breath out just allow the tension to go.

Following this, allow the conscious part of your mind to become aware of the muscles throughout your body. Begin at your head and work your way through down to your feet until all of the muscles are relaxed. If you notice any tension, then just move the muscles around and allow the muscles to relax as you breathe out.