



Affiliated Psychological Services

7293 Dumosa Ave. #8. Yucca Valley, CA. (760)369-7166

Fax (760)369-7167

6274 Adobe Rd. 29 Palms, CA. 92277. (760)367-3290

Fax (760)367-4867

website: affiliatedps.com

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Instructions

I) Deep breathing is one of the easiest stress management techniques to learn and it can be done anywhere. When we become stressed, one of our body's responses is shallow, rapid breathing, which can increase anxiety and feelings of stress. Taking deep, slow breaths is an antidote to these feelings and a way to turn off our stress reactions and turn on the relaxation response. Deep breathing is the foundation of most relaxation techniques.

- Get into a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down.
- Put one hand on your stomach, just below your rib cage
- Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose. You should feel your stomach rising and expanding outward. The most relaxing and deepest breath uses your diaphragm to get more air into your lungs.
- Slowly exhale through your mouth, emptying your lungs and letting your stomach fall.
- Repeat several times until you feel relaxed.
- If any other thoughts occur to you while doing this, just let them go by and focus again on your breathing.

II) Progressive Muscle Relaxation: Muscles respond to thoughts and perceived threats as if the threats were real, by tensing. When our muscles are tense we feel more stressed and irritable. Tense muscles hurt more than relaxed ones. Long-term muscle tension and feelings of stress can cause headaches, stiff necks, backaches, stomach problems, increased chronic pain, etc. Progressive muscle relaxation releases this tension. It involves tensing then relaxing major muscle groups from head to toe, suggested for 20 minutes every day. People with very high blood pressure can skip the tensing phase and just relax the muscles. People with specific injuries can skip tensing those muscles.

- For every muscle group, do 5-10 seconds of tension, as described below. Then relax for 10-15. Notice how just focusing on a muscle group helps it to let go and feel good. Continue deep breathing during the relaxation phase and notice how with every deep breath out, the muscle group feels better and more comfortable and relaxed. Notice how good it feels when those muscles are relaxed.



Affiliated Psychological Services

7293 Dumosa Ave. #8. Yucca Valley, CA. (760)369-7166

Fax (760)369-7167

6274 Adobe Rd. 29 Palms, CA. 92277. (760)367-3290

Fax (760)367-4867

website: affiliatedps.com

Tension phases:

- Feet. With legs out, point toes away from your head and crook toes as far as possible.
- Calves. With legs out, point toes back toward your head as far as possible.
- Thighs. Push heels deep into the chair or sofa if sitting up, down into floor or sofa lying flat.
 - Pelvis and butt. Clench tight as possible.
 - Belly. Draw in, push it back against your spine.
 - Chest, lower back. Stick chest out as far as possible, press shoulders back..
 - Hands and forearm. Make extremely tight fists.
 - Biceps. "Show off muscles;" stick out those biceps.
 - Upper back and shoulders. Try to cover your ears with your shoulders.
 - Neck and chin. Push your chin down into your chest as far as possible.
 - Face. Make a really tight smile, pushing the corners of your mouth up as far as possible, and squeeze your eyes shut.
 - Forehead and scalp: Raise eyebrows up toward ceiling as far as possible.
- Now notice the feeling of relaxation in your whole body. If there is any muscle that isn't fully relaxed, focus on it, breathe deeply, and help it relax fully.
- You may want to imagine yourself floating in the ocean as a jellyfish, or floating on a cloud. Let your whole body go wonderfully loose and let gravity completely take over.
- Notice what it feels like to be fully relaxed. Put this feeling in your pocket. Whenever you become tense or upset, you can take it out, do some deep diaphragmatic breathing, and remember what it feels like to be fully relaxed.