**PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION**

Begin by finding a comfortable position in your chair. Lean back. Make sure your feet can rest comfortably on the floor and that your arms can rest comfortably on your armrests. Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so.

Close your eyes and begin to breathe deeply. Take deep breaths. Notice how the air comes in and fills your lungs. Hold it there for a few seconds and feel the tightness begin to build in your lungs as you hold your breath. Then slowly exhale. Keep taking some deep, relaxing breaths, holding them for a few seconds, and then exhaling. Get yourself as comfortable as you can. As you breathe in, keep your shoulders relaxed if you can, breathing with your diaphragm.

Now take another deep breath and hold it, then breathe out. Now take another deep breath, and this time do it a little slower. Feel the tension leave your body as you breathe out.

Keep breathing, nice and slow. During this exercise, we are going to tense up and tighten certain parts of your body, and then relax them. We are going to go through all the different muscles in your body, one group at a time. Try to keep your whole body relaxed, except for the muscles we are working on. As you sit and relax, notice all the muscles in your body. From your toes, up your legs, to your abdomen, up your chest, down your arms, to your fingers, and your back, your neck, your face, your eyebrows… notice all the muscles in your body.

Let’s begin with your toes on your right foot. Curl your toes upward. Make those muscles very tight. Tighter and tighter. Feel the tightness as you stretch those muscles. Hold that for a few seconds… now relax. Relax those muscles in your right toes so that they are totally relaxed. Focus all your attention on your toes in your right foot and feel how relaxed they are. They should be totally relaxed. Now tighten them again by curling your toes upward. Really tight. Tighter and tighter. Feel how tight those muscles are. Now relax. Relax your toes so that they are totally loose. Feel that relaxation spread across your whole body.

Now with your toes in your right foot, curl your toes downward as hard as you can. Really tight. Feel the muscles in your toes, and your foot, and even your ankle get really tight as you do that. Feel the tension in those muscles. Now relax. Relax those muscles and feel how relaxed they are, from your toes, through your foot, to your ankle, and all through your body. Feel the relaxation. Not curl them downward again. Really tight. Feel the tension. And then relax. Feel how relaxed those muscles are.

Now tighten your leg muscles by pressing down on the floor as hard as you can. Press down really hard. Feel your muscles tighten up. Feel the tension radiate through your leg and up through your body. Now relax. Relax your leg muscles. Feel your leg muscles be totally relaxed. Feel the relaxation permeate your whole leg, out your toes, and through your body. Now tighten your leg muscles again. Really tight. Feel the tension. Now relax. Feel how relaxed your leg muscles are.

Now tighten your right buttock. Clench it really tight. Feel the tension go all through your hip. Feel how tight it is. Now relax. Feel the relaxation. Relax your muscles all down your leg, to your ankle, to your toes. Completely relaxed. Now tighten it again. Tighter and tighter. Really tight. Feel the tension. Now relax again. Feel how relaxed your whole right leg is.

Now let’s move to your left leg. Let’s begin with your toes on your left foot. Curl your toes upward. Make those muscles very tight. Tighter and tighter. Now relax. Relax those muscles in your left toes so that they are totally relaxed. Focus all your attention on your toes in your left foot and feel how relaxed they are. They should be totally relaxed. Now tighten them again by curling your toes upward. Really tight. Tighter and tighter. Feel how tight those muscles are. Now relax. Relax your toes so that they are totally loose.

Now with your toes in your left foot, curl your toes downward as hard as you can. Really tight. Feel the muscles in your toes, and your foot, and even your ankle get really tight as you do that. Feel the tension in those muscles. Now relax. Relax those muscles and feel how relaxed they are, from your toes, through your foot, to your ankle, and all through your body. Feel the relaxation. Not curl them downward again. Really tight. Feel the tension. And then relax. Feel how relaxed those muscles are. With each breath, breathe out all the tension.

Now tighten your left leg muscles by pressing down on the floor as hard as you can. Press down really hard. Feel your muscles tighten up. Feel the tension radiate through your leg and up through your body. Now relax. Relax your leg muscles. Feel your leg muscles be totally relaxed. Feel the relaxation permeate your whole leg, out your toes, and through your body. Now tighten your leg muscles again. Really tight. Feel the tension. Now relax. Feel how relaxed your leg muscles are.

Now tighten your left buttock. Clench it really tight. Feel the tension go all through your hip and thigh. Feel how tight it is. Hold it for a few seconds. Now relax. Feel the relaxation. Relax your muscles all down your leg, to your ankle, to your toes. Completely relaxed. Now tighten it again. Tighter and tighter. Really tight. Feel the tension. Now relax again. Feel how relaxed your whole left leg is.

Next, arch your back. Tighten those muscles. Really tight. Not to the point where it hurts, just really tense. Now relax. Feel the relaxation all the way up your back. Feel how relaxed your back muscles are. Now arch your back again and hold it a few seconds. Keep those muscles tight. Now relax them all. Feel the relaxation. Feel it go all through your body.

Now, tighten your stomach. Tighten your stomach muscles ad hard as you can. Feel how tight they are. Tighter and tighter. Hold for a few seconds. Now relax. Relax your abdominal muscles completely. Just let them relax. Feel that relaxation. Now tighten them again. Really tight. Feel the tension. Now relax them again. Feel how relaxed they are.

Next, with your right arm, bend your elbow and tense your bicep. Squeeze as tight as you can. Really tight. Feel that tension. Now relax. Feel how relaxed your whole arm is. Notice that feeling. Now tense it again. Feel how tight those muscles are. Now relax. Relax your arm completely. Feel that relaxation spread all over your body. With each breath, feel the tension just leaving your body.

Now, with your right hand, clench your fist. Clench it as hard as you can. Really tight. Feel how tight it is. Now relax your hand completely. All the muscles in your hand and wrist, completely relaxed. Notice what that relaxation feels like. Now tighten it again. Feel that tension. Notice all of the stress and tension in your fist. And then completely relax all those muscles. Feel how relaxed your hand is. Totally relaxed. Feel all that stress and tension leave your hands.

Next, with your left arm, bend your elbow and tense your bicep. Just like the other one. Really tight. Feel that tension. Now relax. Relax your arm completely. Visualize all the tension leaving your body through each breath as you relax. Hold that relaxation and notice it. Now tense up again. Squeeze your bicep and feel how tense it is. Now relax. Totally relax your arm and feel that relaxation wash over your whole body.

And now, with your left hand, clench your left fist. Clench it as tight as you can. Ball up all the stress and tension in your body into your fist. Feel how tight those muscles are. Now relax. Relax all those muscles completely and let go of all that tension and stress. Now tense up those muscles again. Really tight. Tighter and tighter. Now relax. Relax your hand and feel that relaxation go out your fingertips.

Now clench both fists. Both at the same time. Really tight. Feel how tight those muscles can be. Now relax them. Relax both your hands and feel that relaxation go up your arms and all over your body. Feel the relaxation with every breath. Now tighten them again. And hold it for a few seconds. Feel the tension. Now relax. Both hands, totally relaxed.

Next, shrug your shoulders. Pull them up really tight. Notice all the tension and stress sin your shoulders. Now completely relax your shoulder muscles. Totally relax them. Let go of all of the tension in your shoulders and let them be totally relaxed. Feel that relaxation go all the way down your back and through your whole body. Now tense them again. Make them really tight. Squeeze all your tension into your shoulders. Hold it for a few seconds, and notice what that tension feels like all over your body. Now relax. Relax your shoulders completely. And let every breath just take away all the tension.

Now press your chin against your chest. Feel the muscles in your neck tighten. Notice that tightness and notice how it feels when those muscles are tense. Now relax. Relax your neck and feel how relaxed all your muscles are. Now tighten your neck muscles again just like before. Tighter and tighter. Feel how tens those muscles are. And relax. Feel totally relaxed. Breathe slow and easy and feel your neck muscles totally relaxed.

Now purse your lips into an “O” shape. Notice how you can feel tension in your lips and cheeks. Feel that tension and notice it. Tighten those muscles as much as you can. Now let them go. Relax. Feel how relaxed those muscles are. Now tighten them again. Make that “O” shape. Really tight. Feel how your whole face tightens up, and how that tension feels across your whole body. Now relax again. Feel all the muscles in your face relaxed. Feel that relaxation go down your neck, down your body, down your arms and legs. Totally relaxed.

Now press your tongue to the roof of your mouth. Notice how even your tongue can carry tension. Notice that tightness. Feel it for a few seconds. Now relax. Relax your tongue completely. Just let it fall wherever it wants to. Totally relaxed. Now tighten it again by pressing it to the roof of your mouth. Really tight. Feel that tension. Now relax. Relax your tongue, and feel your whole face relax, and feel that relaxation spread all through your body.

Now clench your jaw. Clench it really tight. Really tight. Feel how tight those muscles are. Feel that tension. Now relax. Feel your jaw completely relax. Completely relaxed. Now tighten it again. Really tight. Notice what that tension feels like as you breathe. Now breathe out all that tension as you relax. Feel your jaw completely relaxed with every breath.

Now squint your eyes. Squint them really tight. Squeeze them tight. Feel how tight those muscles are. Now relax. Feel that relaxation wash over your whole face. Loosen all those muscles and feel them relax. Now squint your eyes again. Squint them really hard. Feel that tension. Now relax those muscles. Relax all the muscles in your face, and feel the relaxation spread all over your body, out your fingertips, and out your toes. Feel that relaxation.

Now frown with as many muscles in your face as you can. Totally frown. Make a really big frown. Feel all those muscles working hard. Really tense and tight muscles in your face. Now relax. Relax all the muscles in your face. Feel how relaxed that feels. Focus on that feeling of relaxation. Now frown again. Tense up all those muscles. Feel what that feels like. Notice all the muscles in your face. Feel the tension. Now relax. Relax your face completely. Feel that relaxation and feel it spread all over your body.

Finally, wrinkle your forehead. Nice and tight. Tighter and tighter. Feel what that tension feels like. Hold it for a few more seconds. Now relax your forehead. Totally relax those muscles. Feel that relaxation. Notice the difference between the tension and the relaxation. Notice what your forehead feels like to be completely relaxed. Not wrinkle your forehead again. Really tight. Feel the tightness. Now relax. Relax all your muscles in your forehead. Feel that relaxation spread to your whole face. Feel all the muscles in your face totally relaxed. And with every breath, feel the relaxation in your tongue, and in your cheeks, and in your lips. Feel the relaxation in your neck. With every breath feel the relaxation spread to your shoulders, which are completely relaxed. Feel the relaxation in your back, in your stomach, down your arms and out your hands. Feel the relaxation in both your legs, all the way down to your toes.

With every breath, notice that every muscle in your body is completely relaxed. Feel that relaxation through your muscles, all over your body. Any last traces of tension, find them and relax. Relax all of your muscles, from your toes, to your calves, to your legs, to your stomach, to your back, to your shoulders, to your arms, and out your fingers, to your neck, to your cheeks, to your face and your forehead. All completely relaxed.

Now sit and breathe for a few minutes, focused on those feelings of relaxation. Focus on each muscle group and how it is totally relaxed.

When you are ready, open your eyes.