

☺ PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION (PMR) ☺

When we are stressed up, one of the changes in the body is the tightening of muscles especially those around the face, neck and shoulders. The same goes for the intercostals respiratory muscles that are involved in breathing. That's why we often feel breathless during stressful periods. This interferes with the oxygenation of our brain and worsens the stress reaction. In brief, when the body is tensed, the mind too becomes easily tensed. PMR was first introduced by an American physician, Dr. Edmund Jacobson. It can help us to effectively relax the muscles in our body, and in turn calms the mind. There are many versions of PMR. This version consists of 10 postures and each posture involves tensing and relaxing a different group of muscles in the body. The figures and instructions below will guide you in doing PMR. Try to do this twice a day.

1. Squeeze the orange



Clench your fists...
Imagine squeezing oranges for juice...
Feel the tension around the fists...

Count 1 – 10 slowly...
Open your fists and let go the tension...
Feel the waves of relaxation...
Repeat this 2x

2. Superman



Push you hands behind to squeeze the shoulder blades together...and extend your stomach forward...

Feel the muscle tension around the area between shoulder blades and stomach...

Count 1 – 10 slowly...
Let go and return to neutral position...
Feel the waves of relaxation...
Repeat this 2x

3. Tortoise



Imagine that you are a tortoise, push your head inside the shell and shrug your shoulders...

Feel the muscle tension around the neck and shoulders...

Count 1 – 10 slowly...
Let go and return to neutral position...
Feel the waves of relaxation...
Repeat this 2x

4. Push the ceiling



Imagine that the ceiling is falling down...

Straighten your hands with palm facing upward, fingers pointing towards the centre and imagine pushing the ceiling...

Arch your body a bit towards the back and feel the muscle tension around the hands, neck and chest...

Count 1 – 10 slowly...

Let go and return to neutral position...

Feel the wave of relaxation...

Repeat this 2x

The next three postures are for relaxing the facial muscles. They may not be cosmetically appropriate but are certainly effective for facial relaxation.

5. Aaahhhh!



Open your mouth as wide as possible and imagine making the sound, “Aaahhhh!”...

Feel the muscle tension around the mouth...

Count 1 – 10 slowly...

Let go and return to neutral position...

Feel the wave of relaxation...

Repeat this 2x

6. Eeeeehhh!



Clench your teeth and imagine making the sound, “Eeeeehhh!”...

Feel the muscle tension around the jaw...

Count 1 – 10 slowly...

Let go and return to neutral position...

Feel the waves of relaxation...

Repeat this 2x

7. Oohhhhhh!



Pull your nose longitudinally and imagine making the sound, “Oohhhhhh!”...

Feel the muscle tension around the nose...

Count 1 – 10 slowly...

Let go and return to neutral position...

Feel the waves of relaxation...

Repeat this 2x

The next three postures are for relaxing the legs and can be very helpful after standing or walking for a long time.

8. Grab tissue paper with toes



Imagine trying to grab a tissue paper with your toes on both legs...

Feel the muscle tension around the toes...

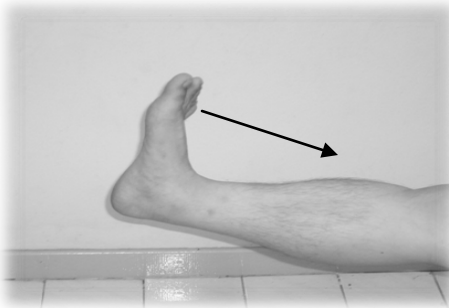
Count 1 – 10 slowly...

Let go and return to neutral position...

Feel the waves of relaxation...

Repeat this 2x

9. Flex ankle towards body



Try to flex your ankle towards the body...

Feel the muscle tension around the calves...

Count 1 – 10 slowly...

Let go and return to neutral position...

Feel the waves of relaxation...

Repeat this 2x

10. Touch the wall with toes



Imagine touching an imaginary wall in front of you with your toes...

Feel the muscle tension around the upper part of the feet...

Count 1 – 10 slowly...

Let go and return to neutral position...

Feel the waves of relaxation...

Repeat this 2x