

Muscle Relaxation

Muscle Group One

Lie down or sit in a comfortable chair that supports your head, and do the following:

1. Make a fist with your left hand without lifting your arm. Make it tighter and tighter. Note how the feeling gets uncomfortable as the tension moves around your hand, forearm, and biceps.
2. Now, relax. Open your hand. Feel the tension pouring out from that area.

Repeat the above with your right hand, and again note the tension in your hand, forearm, and biceps. Then move to the right hand, forearm, and biceps, and repeat.

Muscle Group Two

1. Open your eyes and raise your eyebrows hard. Your forehead will wrinkle. Hold that pose and feel the tension move to your brow, then up into your scalp. Now, relax.
2. Pull your eyebrows down, and frown hard. Notice that feeling of strain spreading over your forehead. Now, relax. Let your brow become smooth again.
3. Next, close your eyelids hard. Feel the tension around your eyes, forehead, and scalp. Now, relax.
4. Clench your teeth. Feel the tension in your jaw move toward your ears. Now, relax your bite. Your lips should gently part.
5. Now, press your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Feel the pressure in the back of your mouth and chin. Now, relax.
6. Purse your lips into an "O." Feel the tightness overtake your forehead, scalp, eyes, tongue, and lips. Now, go loose-lipped.
7. Next, press your head as far back as it can comfortably go. Feel the tension in your neck.
8. Roll your head very slowly to the right. Hold it, then roll it very slowly to the left. Feel the stress move and then disappear with each position.
9. Now, straighten your head and push it forward until your chin comes against your chest. Feel the tension in your throat and the back of your neck.
10. Return your head to a comfortable position.
11. Now, shrug your shoulders high, and hold. Relax. As your shoulders drop, feel relaxation spread through your neck, throat, and shoulders.

Muscle Group Three

12. Breathe in and fill your lungs completely.
13. Hold your breath. Feel where the tension is.
14. Now exhale, let your chest become loose as you let your breath leave your lungs gently, and without thought.
15. Again, inhale and exhale. You should feel more and more tension draining away.

16. Next, tighten your stomach. Try to force breath into your tight stomach. It's difficult. Keep it difficult by pressing your hands on your belly. Make sure the stomach doesn't expand. Hold... then let out your breath.
17. Now arch your back. (Do not put strain on your spine!) Keep the rest of your body as relaxed as possible. Focus on the tension in your lower back. Now, relax, deeper and deeper.

Muscle Group Four

1. Tighten your buttocks and thighs. Flex them by pressing down your heels as hard as you can.
2. Relax and feel the difference.
3. Now, curl your toes downward, making your calves tense. Study the tension. Relax.
4. Now, bend your toes toward your face, creating tension in your shin. Relax again.