

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

Introduction / Definition

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) is a relaxation method developed by Dr. Edmund Jacobson in the 1920s. It works by deliberately tensing and then relaxing muscle groups throughout the body. This practice helps you become more aware of physical tension and teaches you how to release it. Over time, you'll be able to recognize and let go of stress before it builds up too much.

Why it helps

Many people unconsciously hold stress in their bodies—for example, stiff shoulders, clenched jaws, or tight backs. PMR helps break this cycle by teaching you the difference between tension and relaxation. As the body relaxes, the mind often follows. Benefits include:

- Reduced physical muscle tension
- Lower anxiety and stress levels
- Improved sleep quality
- Greater awareness of where you carry stress
- A deep sense of relaxation and calm

Guided Instructions

1. Sit or lie down comfortably. Close your eyes if you'd like.
2. Take a few slow, deep breaths to center yourself.
3. Move through each muscle group in order, tensing and then releasing.
 - **Feet & Toes:** Curl your toes tightly. Hold for 5 seconds. Release.
 - **Calves:** Flex your feet upward. Hold for 5 seconds. Release.
 - **Thighs:** Tighten your thigh muscles. Hold. Release.
 - **Stomach:** Pull in your belly muscles. Hold. Release.
 - **Hands:** Make fists. Hold. Release.
 - **Arms:** Bend elbows and tense biceps. Hold. Release.
 - **Shoulders:** Lift them toward your ears. Hold. Release.
 - **Face:** Scrunch your forehead, eyes, and mouth. Hold. Release.
4. After completing all areas, take a deep breath in. As you exhale, imagine your whole body sinking into relaxation.
5. Rest for a moment in this relaxed state before gently opening your eyes.

Reflection / Notes

Which muscle group felt the most tense? How do you feel now compared to before?
