

Module Three – Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Mindful CBT

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

After using the body scan, progressive muscle relaxation can help focus on areas of tension to reduce it. Many people find it helpful to reduce the muscle tension associated with prolonged periods of anxiety. In progressive muscle relaxation exercises, you tense up particular muscles then relax them.

Preparing for Relaxation

When you begin to practice progressive muscle relaxation exercises, there are some important points to keep in mind.

- 1) Physical injuries – if you have any injuries, consult your doctor before attempting any muscle relaxation exercises.
- 2) Select your surroundings – When you first learn to use these techniques, minimize distractions in your immediate surroundings
- 3) Make yourself comfortable – Find a comfortable position (e.g., sitting, laying down)

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise

- 1) When you're ready, make a fist with your right hand. Focus on the on the tension in your hand and your forearm. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax your hand and forearm for about 10 seconds. Observe the difference between the tension and relaxation.
- 2) Bring your right forearm up to your shoulder. The closer you bring your hand to your shoulder, the tenses your upper arm will become. Focus on the muscles in between your elbow and your shoulder. Hold the tension for 5 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- 3) Left hand and forearm. Repeat as above.
- 4) Left upper arm. Repeat as above.
- 5) Focus on your face now, raising your eyebrows as high as they will go, as though you were surprised by something. Hold for 5 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- 6) Squeeze your eyes tight shut. Focus on the tension around your eyes and your cheeks. Hold for 5 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- 7) Open your mouth as wide as you can, as some people may do when they have a big yawn. Hold for 5 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- 8) Focus on the muscles in your neck by facing forward and then pulling your head back slowly. You are looking at the floor then looking at the ceiling. Hold for five seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- 9) Tense the muscles in your shoulders as you bring your shoulders up to your ears. Hold for 5 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.

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- 10) Push your shoulder blades back, trying to almost touch them together. Hold for 5 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- 11) Breathe deeply, filling your lungs and chest with air. Hold for 5 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- 12) Squeeze your buttock muscles. Hold for 5 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- 13) Tighten your right thigh. Hold for 5 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- 14) On your right lower leg, pull your toes toward you to feel tightness in your calf muscle. Hold for 5 seconds and relax for 10 seconds.
- 15) Curl your toes downwards to feel the tension in your right foot. Hold for 5 seconds then relax for 10 seconds.
- 16) Repeat for #14, #15, and # 16 for the left thigh, left lower leg and left foot.

Physical sensations you might notice

Tingly	Burning	Throbbing	Trembling	Light	Heavy
Tight/Loose	Shooting	Stinging	Airy	Cutting	Tense/relaxed
Soft/Rough	Prickly	Pulling	Burning	Vibrating	Cool/Warm
Stiff/Flexible	Numb	Achy	Sinking	Clammy	Dry
Airy/Dense	Shaky	Itchy	Pulsing	Dull	Sharp

Emotional reactions you might notice

Impatience	Boredom	Shame	Release
Joy	Sadness	Fear	Grief
Pride	Disgust	Surprise	Anger

Thoughts you might notice

Reviewing the Past	Imaging the Future	Thinking about Others
Planning	Evaluating/Analyzing	Circular Thinking
Wishing/Hoping/Comparing	Labeling/Cataloguing	Judging

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Exercise: Journaling Mindfully

Thoughts

Emotions

Behaviour (Urge)

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday
