

## **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

This is a relaxation technique which involves stretching different muscles in turn and then relaxing them to release tension from the body and relax your mind.

Set aside 15 to 20 minutes for this exercise with no interruptions or distractions.

Find a warm, quiet place with no distractions. Get completely comfortable, either sitting or lying down.

Close your eyes and begin by focusing on your breathing; breathing slowly and steadily, as described above.

If you have pain in certain muscles, or if there are muscles that you find it difficult to focus on, spend more time on relaxing other parts.

Aim to learn the difference between tight and relaxed muscles. Focus on muscles changing from tight to relaxed.

### *Forehead*

Pull your eyebrows together and feel the tension, then gradually let your forehead smooth out.

### *Eyes*

Screw your eyes up tight then gradually let them smooth out, leaving your eyes closed, feeling your eyeballs sink and your eyelids droop. Let them get really heavy.

### *Jaw*

Bite your back teeth together, then gradually ease off, and let your jaw get heavy. Now open your mouth wide enough to stretch the hinges of your jaw and then release the tension and feel the relaxation in your mouth and jaw.

### *Neck and Shoulders*

Hunch your shoulders and hold for 5 seconds then gradually let them settle down, notice the difference between the tension and the relaxation in your neck and shoulders.

### *Hands and arms*

Clench your fists, and tense your arms out straight; feel the tightness in your hands and arms, hold for 5 seconds then slowly relax them. Let as much tension go as possible.

### *Tummy*

Pull in your tummy tight then gradually let it go feeling it relax.

### *Thighs*

Push your heels down hard against the floor, feeling the tightness in your thighs, then gradually let that go.

### *Calves*

Point your toes and feel the tension in your calves, then gradually let that tightness and tension go.

### *Feet*

Curl your toes downward feel the tension in your toes and feet then gradually relax them again.