

Progressive Relaxation

In this method of relaxation we are trying to get you completely relaxed, into a deep state of relaxation without any movement, without any tension, any stiffness and almost without any feeling, so you mustn't be frightened of letting go and you must try to avoid fidgeting.

Now we just deal with each part of the body in turn and we start off with your arms. Both your arms from your shoulders right down to your fingers, try and let both arms just hang loosely from the shoulders and rest on the chair or the bed or whatever, and you think first of all about your fingers, that the fingers aren't stiff or tense, that your hands are relaxed, your wrists are quite loose, your lower arms relaxed, your elbow joints quite loose, upper arms relaxed and your shoulder joints quite loose, so that your arms are hanging quite loosely and resting quite heavily on the chair or the bed.

Your arms are as relaxed as you can get them, now that does not mean to say that they are completely relaxed — you have to learn to relax. As long as you are quite confident that you are not moving them and there is no stiffness then you will probably become more and more relaxed as time goes on. This is you learning to relax, both your arms are as relaxed as you can get them at this stage and it doesn't matter how much, how relaxed that is as long as they are as relaxed as you can get them. They should feel quite heavy, quite loose, quite limp, almost as if they didn't belong to you — switched off, pressing down quite heavily on the bed of the chair. Now leaving your arms as relaxed as they are move on to your legs. That's both legs from your hip joints right down to your toes, we start off with your toes. There will be no stiffness, feet should be relaxed, your ankles loose, your lower legs relaxed, the knee joints relaxed, your upper legs relaxed, your hip joints should feel quite loose, so that both your legs like your arms are loose, limp and heavy as relaxed as you can get them at this stage. No movement no stiffness, not much tension, completely switched off, almost as if they didn't belong to you,

your arms and your legs loose, limp and heavy just like lumps of lead, completely switched off

Now we move on to your body — to your stomach muscles. Just let your stomach muscles relax and sag. Next your back muscles — its very hard to tell if back muscles are relaxed so don't worry too much about them. Your should muscles you can certainly feel tense but as long as you are not tense in your shoulders, holding them very stiff then they probably will relax as well as you begin to get more and more relaxed.

And now we come to the breathing and breathing is very important. Breathing is the most important of the lot, your breathing should be nice and smooth, it doesn't matter how fast or how slow or how deep or how shallow, nice smooth breathing is a sign of relaxation because you have to relax to breathe normally. If you are tense then you can't breathe normally and you have to have an extra breathe or an extra deep breathe every now and again, but if your chest muscles are relaxed then you can breathe nice and smoothly. Keeping your mouth a little bit open can help, this can help to dry up the saliva, you don't have to keep swallowing, also if you breathe through your mouth you can use your stomach muscles to breathe rather than your chest muscles and that's usually a more relaxing kind of breathing. you feel your stomach rising and falling as you breathe in and out through your mouth. Now because you normally relax when you are breathing out you can use this breathing out to get yourself more relaxed, so as you breathe out really let go, just let the air come out almost in a sigh. Relax, relax and really letting go every time you breathe out, feel yourself sinking deeper and deeper into the chair, more and more switched off. You can feel the tension flowing out through your fingers and out through your legs and out with your breath and really relax and let go. You can often use this breathing to help you to relax quickly. Breathe out, really letting go and don't be frightened to let go —its perfectly safe. Keep your breathing nice and smooth and now we will pass back to your shoulder muscles and make sure that they are still relaxed. Make your

neck muscles as relaxed as you can get them, let your throat relax, your jaw slightly open, your tongue relaxed, your cheeks, eyes, eye lids and forehead, your whole face should be quite expressionless, because your face is switched off too — really letting go, no tension, no stiffness, no expression on your face, just as when you are asleep, when you are asleep you are deeply relaxed and you are trying to achieve the same depth of relaxation while you are still awake. You are leaning to give all your muscles a good rest, how to feel that you are switched off, that you are not on edge because that is one of the great benefits of relaxation.

Now we have been through all of the muscles once and you may feel a bit more relaxed than you were but don't worry too much about just how relaxed you are, what you do in the course of 15-20 minutes is just go through that again and again, just getting more relaxed, because you go back to muscles you may find that they have tensed up again because that is their habit, habit means what they do when you are not thinking, If they have tensed up again you have to relax them consciously once more or you may find that you can get a bit more relaxed than you could previously because the rest of you is more relaxed and don't worry too much if you have missed anything out, if you are really relaxing even if you have missed out a muscle it will relax anyway, it's quite safe to relax a nice natural thing to do, you do it every night when you are asleep.

So now we go through the muscles again, that's both your arms, fingers, hands, wrists, lower arms, elbows, upper arms, shoulder joints, both arms loose, limp and heavy, no movement, no stiffness, no tension. You may detect a tingling in your fingers and that's a good sign, a warm tingling is a sign that can happen in other parts of your body as you get more and more relaxed, its not the same as pins and needles, it's a very safe things a nice warm tingling, keep your arms relaxed.

Now we move on to your legs again. You probably will find that they have tensed up particularly if you are sitting in a chair, so again think about your toes, feet, ankles, lower legs, knees, upper legs, hips, your legs also are now relaxed as relaxed as you can get them and moving on — start muscles relaxed, back muscles not too tense, breathing nice and smoothly through your mouth and using your stomach muscles. Don't be frightened of letting go, don't be frightened of drifting away, its perfectly safe, you are always very safe when you are relaxed, your body is at rest, therefore no great strain is being put on your body or being put on your heart, your heart is more at rest when you are relaxed.

Now we move on to your shoulders again, your neck and throat, tongue, jaw, cheeks, eyes and eye lids, forehead, deeply relaxed, deeply relaxed. Once you feel that you are quite good at relaxing when you do the muscles and you feel that you are really quite relaxed then memorise what they feel like, memorise what your arms feel like when they are relaxed, what your face feels like when it is relaxed, if you memorise then its easy to detect when you are tense and then you can correct it by relaxing and by going through this tape you have been learning how to relax but the important thing is to use this relaxation at other times. During the day just try and become a more relaxed kind of person no matter what you are doing whether its sitting watching television, whether its moving around the house, whether its out for a walk, try to do it in a relaxed kind of way so your arms are relaxed, your face is relaxed and you just become a more relaxed kind of person.

After the induction...

As you go deeper and deeper...realizing that the way that you think has a profound effect upon your health....you decide that you are no longer going to be controlled by daily stress....you are becoming more and more relaxed in every avenue of your life...while being relaxed you are able to concentrate better and focus better when working or just having fun...you find that you have less and less anxiety about

stressful situations because of your increased level of concentration...the fact that you are more relaxed in decision making makes you more effective at everything that you do...you are confident that you can overcome any mental, physical or spiritual obstacle...you are in control...

You find that you worry less and less about things because you are more relaxed... you know that applying your mental energies on solutions rather than problems is the key...you are becoming more and more relaxed with each word that I say...you handle everyday stress with a calm cool head...you focus on solutions for handling stress...you seek out information on handling your stress....You know that you can do anything that you put your mind to....you are in control...

In your decision to reduce stress and become more effective, you decide that you are going to reduce stress through exercise and proper diet...you resolve to find new ways to reduce tension and worry....you dedicate a few minutes of your day each day to getting away from it all...with a new hobby or project...reading a book...you know that in many cases, laughter is the best medicine....feeding your spirit...feeding your creative mind... smiling more...making a difference in other peoples lives....spending time with loved ones...

in learning to relax you find that you are more effective at your work and at recreation. you find you have more fun while at play...you resolve to lead by example...you know that becoming a more relaxed individual will allow you to live a longer happier life...while being relaxed you are able to concentrate better and focus better when working or playing...you find that you have less and less anxiety about stressful situations because of your increased level of concentration and focus...the fact that you are more relaxed in decision making makes you more effective at everything that you do...you know that you can do anything that you put your mind to...you are in control...

you decide now to plan your day wisely, to manage your time

wisely and make a list each day for things you need to accomplish...You now work out anger or tension in a more positive manner by finding creative outlets like exercise, hobbies, art, writing, music and so forth....you can do anything you put your mind to...

From now on, anytime you feel a stressful situation coming on, you will simply take a long deep breath and you will handle the situation with a calm cool head...with greater concentration and focus...from now on thats your signal...one long deep breath and you will relax and handle the situation with a calm clear head.

if there is an area of your life that is causing you stress, you decide to focus on solving this problem....focus on solving this problem with a calm cool head...with a greater capacity for concentration....handling this situation with a smile...with confidence and resolve....you know you are in control...you can do anything you put your mind to...

You are coming up now a more relaxed and confident individual....feeling wonderful. In a moment, you will return to your full awareness... I will count from one to five. When I reach the count of five, your eyes will open and you will feel wonderful and rejuvenated. Counting now...One...Two... Three...Four...Five...Open your eyes.