

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is a way to release stress through tensing and releasing muscle groups. It relaxes your muscles and lowers blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing. This technique is simple but it takes a little practice.

Some people prefer a guided muscle relaxation. You can listen to BC Cancer Mindfulness & Meditation and Relaxation & Guided Imagery playlists on Soundcloud (soundcloud.com/phsabc). Use your mobile device or computer. You can also download the free Soundcloud app and search BC Cancer tracks.

Suggestion:

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Slowly take deep breaths. Start by relaxing your feet. Tense up a group of muscles. Do not strain yourself. Count while you hold the tension for about 5-10 seconds. Release the tension all at once. Stay relaxed for 10 - 20 seconds. Some people like to count.

For example:

Tense while you count to 5, then release all at once. Rest while you count to 10.

Tense while you count to 10, then release all at once. Rest while you count to 20.

Wondering how to start? Follow this list:

Lower body

- Feet – point toes and curl them under.
- Hips and legs – tighten legs by pressing down the heels of your feet; Raise your toes and turn the soles of your feet towards each other.
- Back – arch your back and draw your shoulder blades together.

Upper body

- Abdomen – tighten your tummy as much as you can.
- Chest – inhale deeply, hold the breath, and exhale.
- Hands and arms – extend arms in front of you and squeeze your hands into fists; Push arms down as firmly as you can.

Head

- Mouth and jaw – force a smile and clench your jaw.
- Forehead – Raise eyebrows as high as you can.
- Eyes and nose – close eyes tight and wrinkle nose.