

Progressive relaxation

Source: Mills et al NDARC psychosis and substance use booklet, 2011

Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing and relaxing different muscle groups one after the other. It helps to reduce physical and mental tension. A full session of relaxation takes about 15 to 20 minutes.

1. Sit in a comfortable chair in a quiet room.
2. Put your feet flat on the floor and rest your hands in your lap.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Do the controlled breathing exercise for three minutes.
5. After three minutes of controlled breathing, start the muscle relaxation exercise
6. Tense each of your muscle groups for 10 seconds, then relax for 10 seconds, in the following order:

Hands: clench your hands into fists, and then relax

Lower arms: bend your hands up at the wrists, and then relax

Upper arms: bend your arms up at the elbow, and then relax

Shoulders: lift your shoulders up, and then relax

Neck: stretch your neck gently to the left, then forward, then to the right, then backwards in a slow rolling motion, then relax

Forehead and scalp: raise your eyebrows, and then relax

Eyes: close your eyes tightly, and then relax

Jaw: clench your teeth, and then relax

Chest: breathe in deeply, then breathe out and relax

Stomach: pull your tummy in, and then relax

Upper back: pull your shoulders forward, and then relax

Lower back: while sitting, roll your back into a smooth arc, then relax; **Buttocks:** tighten your buttocks, then relax

Thighs: push your feet firmly into the floor, and then relax

Calves: lift your toes off the ground, then relax and

Feet: gently curl your toes down, and then relax

7. Continue controlled breathing for five more minutes, enjoying the feeling of relaxation.