PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

With this relaxation technique, you focus on muscle groups one by one. This reduces anxiety and tension immediately by allowing you to become more aware of physical sensations. You can do this with your eyes open or closed.

These steps will guide you through progressive muscle relaxation starting at your toes and working your way up to your neck and head.

**STEP 1**
Take a few moments to relax, breathing in and out slowly and deeply.

**STEP 2**
When you’re relaxed and ready to start, shift your attention to your right foot. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.

**STEP 3**
Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot, squeezing as tightly as you can for a count of 10.

**STEP 4**
Next, relax your foot, and focus on the tension flowing away and the way your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.

**STEP 5**
Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.

**STEP 6**
When you’re ready, shift your attention to your left foot and follow the same sequence of muscle tension and release while you pay attention to the sensations.

**STEP 7**
Slowly work up through your body — legs, abdomen, back, arms, neck, face — contracting and relaxing the muscle groups as you go.