

Progressive muscle relaxation: full exercise

1. **Foot.** Starting with your right foot, curl your toes downwards, and then let go.
2. **Lower leg.** On your right-hand side, pull your toes towards you to get a stretch down your calf muscles, then let go.
3. **Upper leg.** Tighten your right thigh, and let go.
4. **Hand.** Make a fist with your right hand, then uncurl your fist and let go.
5. **Arm.** Tighten your right arm muscles by pulling your forearm up towards your shoulder whilst making a fist. Then move your forearm down again, and uncurl your fist.

Repeat steps one to five on the left side. Then:

6. **Buttocks/hips.** Squeeze your buttock muscles, and then relax them.
7. **Stomach.** Tighten your abdominal muscles, and then let them go soft. You can do this by gently pulling your stomach in, and then letting it out.
8. **Chest.** Tighten your muscles in your chest by taking in a deep breath, and then exhale.
9. **Shoulder blades/back.** Push your shoulder blades together, pushing out your chest.
10. **Shoulders.** Raise your shoulders up to your neck, and then let them slowly drop down again.

11. **Mouth and jaw.** Open your mouth wide, as if yawning, and then slowly let it close.

12. **Eyes and cheeks.** Squeeze your eyes shut, and then slowly let them open again.

13. **Eyebrows.** Push your eyebrows together as though frowning, and then let the frown go.

When you've been through all the various areas of your body, you should hopefully be feeling relaxed.

Take a couple of minutes to enjoy this feeling before getting up.

If you're feeling under a lot of pressure, you can repeat these exercises two or three times a day. Otherwise, once a day will be enough to help you feel calm.

You may find after trying these that you'd like a more guided relaxation practice, or that you'd like to try other techniques, in which case please explore painconcern.org.uk.