

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

WHAT IS PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION (PMR)?



Technique that involves systematically tensing and relaxing various muscle groups



Learn how to discriminate between sensations of tension and relaxation

WHY USE PMR?

PMR:

- Promotes body relaxation
- ↓ pain, ↓ stress and ↓ muscle contractures
- ↓ joint tenderness in those with arthritis
- ↓ tension and ↓ anxiety
- ↓ negative thoughts and depressive symptoms
- Has a calming effect

Research on PMR in elderly individuals has shown PMR:

- ↑ satisfaction with life
- ↑ quality of life
- ↑ sleep quality
- ↑ cognitive and functional capacity
- ↓ chronic pain

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM PMR?

- Individuals with:
 - Insomnia
 - Headaches
 - Hypertension (high blood pressure)
 - Chronic pain
 - Rheumatoid arthritis
 - Irritable bowel syndrome
- Individuals looking to ↓ tension and ↓ stress in their daily life
- Individuals looking for a simple relaxation technique

HOW DO YOU DO PMR?

- 1) Find a quiet, comfortable place to either sit or lie down. Close your eyes.
- 2) Take three deep breaths.
- 3) Starting with the dominant hand and forearm, tense (contract) and hold this muscle group for 5-7 seconds.
- 4) Relax the muscle groups for 10 seconds.
 - As you relax, take a deep breath out.
 - Remember to focus your attention on the muscle group as it relaxes (so you can differentiate between tension and relaxation).
- 5) Repeat with the next muscle group (see below for complete list).
- 6) When you are finished all of the muscle groups, count backwards from 4 to 1 and:
 - On the count of four, start moving your legs and feet;
 - On the count of three, move your arms and hands;
 - On the count of two, move the head and neck; and
 - On the count of one, open your eyes.

WHICH MUSCLE GROUPS ARE USED IN PMR?

It's recommended to tense and relax the muscle groups in the following order:

Start with the upper body:

- Dominant hand and forearm (clench your fist)
- Dominant biceps (tighten your biceps by bending your elbow while maintaining a fist)
 - Repeat PMR on your non-dominant hand, forearm, and biceps
- Forehead (raise your eyebrows as high up as you can)
- Eyes (clench your eyelids tightly shut)
- Cheeks and jaws (smile as widely as you can)
- Neck (tuck your chin to your chest)
- Shoulders (shrug both of your shoulders up towards your ears)
- Chest (take a deep breath and hold for 5 seconds)
- Back (arch your back up and away from the floor/chair)

Finish with the lower body:

- Dominant thigh (squeeze your thigh muscles)
- Dominant calf (point your toes away from you)
- Dominant foot (curl your toes downward)
 - Repeat PMR on your non-dominant thigh, calf and foot

REFERENCES

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