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**Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

*Relaxation like this that involve ‘doing’ are useful for those who find it difficult to be still and to whom feelings of relaxation are unfamiliar.*

Purpose to raise awareness of muscle tension

to raise awareness of the difference between tension and then less tension.

to relate this to everyday situations so that inappropriate tensions may be recognized and then released at will.

Method contraction and then release of major muscle groups.

focusing on the sensations produced by these actions.

Aim to hold MINIMAL RECOGNISABLE TENSION for a moment - then LET GO.

The main focus is on LETTING GO.

**Always work within your own capacity. You know your body the best, so move within your own limits. If I ask you to do something that you know is not possible or comfortable for you, then just ‘imagine’ making that movement.**

I will give you a series of instructions to make specific movements. Hold them, recognise the increased tensions and then let go. We will make each movement **3 times**.

1. Making yourself comfortable.
2. Gently breathing in – hold for a brief moment – then let go. Recognising the overall tension with the breath in and the overall relaxation as the breath goes out.
3. Gently pulling up the toes towards the knees – just a little – holding briefly – and let go – recognising the difference. X 3
4. Pressing the heels into the floor – hold – and let go. X3
5. Pulling the knees together – hold briefly – now let them drift apart a little. Be aware of the new position. X3
6. Squeeze the buttocks together - hold - now let go. X3
7. Gently pull the tummy muscles towards the spine – hold just enough to recognise the tension – now let go and feeling the difference. X3
8. Gently pull the shoulders up towards the ears – just enough to recognise the tension – hold briefly – and let go. Recognise the new position. X3
9. Gently press your elbows and upper arms to the side of your rib cage – hold for a moment – then let go. X3
10. Hands. Gently clench the hands – hold just long enough to recognise the tension – then let go. X3
11. Now jut your head forward – as in aggression – hold briefly – now let the head go back in a balanced position. Feel the difference. X3
12. Grit your teeth together – hold – now let your jaw sag slightly – feel the difference. X3
13. Lips – press together – and then let go until hardly touching. Recognise your soft lips. X3
14. Press the tongue briefly to the top of the mouth – hold – and then let it drop loosely. Feel the new position. X3
15. Eyes – screw them up a little – hold – and let go. X3
16. Forehead – frown a little – hold - now let go. Look surprised a little – hold – now let go. X3

Now spend a few moments enjoying the feeling of release – letting go a little more with each outward breath.

Then beginning to gently move the hands and the fingers, the feet, and the legs. Opening your eyes if they were closed and becoming aware of your surroundings. Having a stretch, a yawn, and a wriggle.

Enjoying the feelings of relaxation for a long as possible.

Julie Milton 10/8/20