

Progressive muscle relaxation

When we feel worried or are in 'fight, flight or freeze' mode, our muscles can become tight without us even realising it. To help ourselves feel calmer, we can try something special: focusing on each group of muscles in our body. We can squeeze these muscles really tight for about 10-20 seconds, like giving them a big hug, and then let go and relax them for another 10-20 seconds. It's a bit like a game for our muscles that can help us to feel a bit better! Remember not to stretch, push or clench too hard! These movements shouldn't be painful and if in doubt, check with your doctor before having a go.

Forehead

Give your forehead a scrunch, like you're really thinking hard! Tighten it up, even tighter! Okay, you can let it relax now. Hold it like this for about 10 seconds.

Eyes

Squeeze your eyes shut, as if you're about to blow out the candles on a birthday cake and make a wish.

Cheeks

Imagine you're blowing up a balloon with your cheeks! Puff them out as big as you can, like you've got a mouthful of yummy food. And now, let them go and relax.

Mouth

Clench your teeth as though you are chewing on a huge piece of bubblegum! It's tough to chew, but keep going!

Arms

Make your arms really straight and stiff, clenching your fists, like you're turning into an ice sculpture! Freeze! Now, let them relax.

Shoulders

Try to bring your shoulder blades close together, like they're saying hello to each other! Squeeze them tighter, almost there, scrunch them right up to your ears. Now, give them a break and relax, letting them fall all the way down.

Lower back

Sit up super straight, as if you're trying to touch the sky! Taller! Taller! And now, let it all go and relax.

Legs

Stretch out your legs, making them as straight as possible. Imagine you're freezing like a statue. Now, let them relax.

Feet

Push your feet into the floor as hard as you can, like you're trying to leave footprints! Push, push, and now relax.

Toes

Imagine you're at the beach and squish your toes into the sand, like you're making little sandcastles. Squish, squish, and now relax.



Next time you are feeling tense or anxious, you could try some of these! It might help to focus on the part of your body that is feeling most tense.