

Progressive Relaxation Worksheet

Purpose: Progressive Relaxation is designed to help you relax your body and your mind. If done correctly, it can help relieve and prevent hypertension, headaches, stress, anxiety, insomnia and exhaustion. In addition to all that, it can increase your ability to focus on a project, assignment, problem, or a performance.

Method:

Step 1: Where and what do you need?

- Find a quiet, dark room, where you can lay down.
- It is not a bad idea to use a pillow and a blanket.
- Turn on some soft music. Avoid using music that contains lyrics.

Step 2: Positioning your body and clearing your mind...

- Lay down on your back and ensure that your arms and legs are outstretched and not touching anything (i.e., other parts of your body, or furniture.)
- Close your eyes
- Slow down and deepen your breathing pattern.
- Clear your mind by focusing on the music and your breathing
- Don't allow your mind to wander to other things.
- As you exhale, let your cares and stressors (physical, mental, and emotional) leave your mind.
- Continue this process for 1 to 2 minutes and then move onto the next step.

Step 3: Relaxing your muscles...

- Starting with your feet and continuing all the way up your body, group by group (For example: feet, calves, thighs, buttocks, stomach, chest, arms and hands, neck, face and head.), as you inhale, flex each muscle group separately for 10 seconds. (Or for the amount of time it takes you to slowly inhale and exhale twice.)
- As you exhale at the end of 10 seconds, or on your second exhale, relax that muscle group.
- Move onto the next muscle group and follow the same process.
- As you flex and relax each muscle group focus on the tension that is created and the release that comes with relaxing that particular muscle group.
 - As you feel the physical tension leave your body as you relax that muscle group let your emotional and mental tension flow out of your body as well.
- Throughout this process, clear your mind of everything else, think only of your breathing, tensing and relaxing your muscles, and the music. Let everything else go.
- If done properly you will reach a state of consciousness where your mind is still awake, but your body has shut down many of its sensory functions, resulting in an absence of feeling in relation to your body.
- This step should take around 3-5 minutes.

Step 4: Recharge your batteries or try positive visualization...

- Once you achieve the results stated in Step 3 you can choose to remain in that state for 10 to 15 minutes as a means of relaxing. (You can do this instead of taking a nap during the day, you'll find that you will feel more refreshed and ready to take on your next task.)
- If you would like this process to be a little more active, you can use this time to focus on one problem.
 - Once you have achieved the results stated in step 3 you can select one issue or situation that you would like to focus on.
 - If it is a situation, it could be a performance, an interview, or a discussion you will be having in the near future, play it out in your mind and visualize yourself handling the situation perfectly.
 - Play that over and over in your mind.

Step 5: Things to be mindful of...

- Try not to let yourself fall asleep. (There is one exception to that rule, if you are using this process to help deal with insomnia, you should use this process as a means to fall a sleep.)
- Be patient, don't rush your breathing or the muscle relaxation, it will foul up the process.
- You have to be able to clear your mind. Learn to let things go for a little while. When you finish you will have a much clearer view of things and you will be better prepared to see, understand, and deal with whatever problem you have.

Assignment: Answer these questions on an attached sheet of paper

Part 1: How did you feel after our first progressive relaxation exercise in class? Were you able to use an altered state of consciousness to solve a problem or visualize your performance? How did you accomplish this?

Part 2: How did you feel after our second progressive relaxation/ meditation exercise in class? How was your experience, compared to the first progressive relaxation exercise?

Part 3: Attempt progressive relaxation once again by the end of this unit, sometime on your own. Was your experience any different than your experience in class? How so? What changes did you make to make your experience more or less productive?