

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script for Caregivers

The purpose of teaching Progressive Muscle Relaxation techniques to caregivers is to provide a tool for dealing with anger, anxiety, and other difficult emotions. During these sessions, it may be helpful to have soft, soothing music playing in the background, while speaking in a low, calming voice, in order to foster a more relaxing atmosphere. Follow the scripts in the order provided below, when teaching Progressive Muscle Relaxation to caregivers.

There are eight areas that we will be focusing on:

1. Feet
2. Legs
3. Stomach
4. Arms
5. Hands
6. Shoulders and Neck
7. Face
8. Whole Body

1. Feet:

“We are going to practice different ways to let our muscles help our bodies calm down and relax when something stressful or upsetting happens. Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and breathe calm, soothing breaths. With your feet firmly on the ground curl up your toes as much as you can inside your shoes. Hold it and keep it tense (hold for 3–5 seconds). Now release. Feel how, as your muscles relax, you also feel a sense of calm.”

Repeat the tension and relaxation procedure two or three times.

2. Legs:

“Next, we are going to practice using our leg muscles to help us feel calmer when something makes us angry. This time tense your legs. Feel each muscle as it becomes stronger and stronger, pushing into the ground. Hold it just a little bit more (3–5 seconds), and relax. Exhale a big breath as you relax your leg muscles. Notice how loose and calm your legs now feel.”

Repeat the tension and relaxation procedure two or three times.

3. Stomach:

“To learn how to relax our stomach muscles we are going to first suck in our stomach, using our muscles to make them as tight and skinny as possible. Hold it for a few seconds, then with a big exhale breathe we are going to relax our stomach muscles as we breathe out. Remember to make sure that the muscles in your stomach are as tight as possible. After you exhale, pay attention to how relaxed and good your stomach is feeling.”

Repeat the tension and relaxation procedure two or three times.

4. Arms:

“Next we are going to focus on our arms. To practice tensing our arm muscles, wrap your arms around yourself, as if to give yourself a big hug. Hold yourself tight for a few seconds, keeping each of the muscles in your forearm and bicep tight and firm. Hold this for 3 to 5 seconds. When you release, allow your arms to fall gently at your sides. Move them from side to side to make sure the muscles are relaxed. Notice how good it feels to allow your arm muscles to relax after tensing them so much.”

Repeat the tension and relaxation procedure two or three times.

5. Hands:

“To practice this with our hands, we are simply going to ball our hands up into tight fists. Hold your hands in these fists for about 5 seconds. When you release this grasp, wiggle your fingers, and breathe calm soothing breaths. Notice how good your arms are feeling now that they are nice and relaxed.”

Repeat the tension and relaxation procedure two or three times.

6. Shoulders and Neck:

“The next area we are going to focus on is our shoulder and neck. Pull your shoulders up high, as close as you can get them to your ears, and pull your chin down toward your chest. Tighten and tense these muscles as you hold them in this position for a few seconds. Now, relax. Tilt your head from side to side to help these muscles unwind. Note how much better your shoulders and neck are feeling after this exercise.”

Repeat the tension and relaxation procedure two or three times.

7. Face:

“We have finally made our way all the way up to the top of our bodies: our face! Make a disgusted face by puckering your lips, squishing your nose, closing your eyes tight, and wrinkling your brow. Hold this face for a few seconds and release. Breathe a sigh of relief as you relax all of the muscles on your face. Pay attention to how good it feels to relax those muscles after tightening them up so.”

Repeat the tension and relaxation procedure two or three times.

8. Whole Body:

“Finally, we are going to use all of the muscles in our bodies to help us relax and be calm. In order to do this, all at once, tense every muscle in your body. Squish your toes, squeeze your leg muscles, ball your fists, tense your arm muscles, pull in your stomach, and tighten your face muscles. Hold it for a few seconds and relax with a big deep breath out. Gently move your head from side to side, wiggle your fingers, let your legs relax, and loosen all of the muscles of your face and stomach. Breathe calm, deep, soothing breaths. Feel how loose and relaxed your whole body is. Notice how each muscle came together to help you relax and how good it feels now that we are done.”

Repeat the tension and relaxation procedure two or three times.