

Progressive Muscle Relaxation for Children

Mindful progressive muscle relaxation generates a physical - and emotional - relaxation response. When tension builds up in a muscle, and then is released, it trains the muscle to a more relaxed state than it was originally. In addition to increasing mindful awareness of physical sensations, releasing muscle tension also helps to dissolve feelings of stress and anxiety.

Breathe In

Taking a deep breath in through your nose, hold for a few seconds, now release, letting the air out slowly. Now imagine your stomach is a balloon filling up with air, and as you take a deep breath in, the balloon grows bigger. Hold for a few seconds. And as you release the breath, imagine that the air in the balloon is slowly escaping. Paying attention to the sensations in your body, notice how you feel.

Legs and Feet

Now imagine you are peering over the a wall at the zoo, trying to see your favorite animal on the other side. Pretending you are on your tippy toes, extend your legs in front of you, squeezing your leg muscles as hard as you can, down through to your toes. Hold your strong muscles while you breathe in. Now relax your legs and feet. Notice how you feel.

Hands and Arms

Pretend you are squeezing an orange in your right hand. Squeeze it hard enough to make orange juice. Pay attention your muscles tightening and heating up in your hand and arm. Now imagine you drop the orange. And relax. Notice how your right hand and arm feel now that they are relaxed. Repeat with the left hand.

Stomach

Imagine that you trying to get through a very narrow doorway. So you squeeze your stomach in as tight as you can, so you can try to slide through the passage. Hold your stomach muscles in. And now relax, letting your stomach soften. Whoops, now you have to back through the doorway. Repeat tightening your stomach muscles. Then release.

Arms and Shoulders

Now pretend that you have just woken up from a long and restful sleep. Reaching your arms out in front of you and then up over your head, stretch out as far as you can go. Feeling how your shoulders are pulled, stretch even higher. Taking a deep breath, release the air, letting your arms fall back to your side. Repeat one more time.

Shoulders and Neck

Now imagine you are outside, looking up at the trees and clouds in the sky. All of a sudden it starts to rain. Pulling your shoulders towards your ears and extending your head down towards your shoulders, you shield your face from the rain. Holding that position, you realize that the storm has passed so you can relax your shoulders, neck and head again. Oh no, it starts to rain and again. Pull your head in towards your raised shoulders once more. Phew, it stopped. Now relax.

Face

Now pretend that a ladybug has landed on your nose and tickles you. Trying to move her off without using your hands so she doesn't get hurt, you wiggle and scrunch up your nose. As you are wrinkling up your nose, the ladybug flies off but now lands on your forehead. Without using your hands, try to get her off your forehead by wrinkling and scrunching as hard as you can. Phew, the ladybug flies off, so now you can relax your face.

Relaxing The Whole Body

Taking slow, deep breaths in and out, relax your whole body. Breathing in, breathing out, notice how you feel. Settle deeply and relax into your body.