

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) – Sleep Protocol

What is Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)?

Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a scientifically studied relaxation technique in which you gently tense and then relax different muscle groups in the body.

This helps reduce physical tension, calm the nervous system, and prepare the mind and body for sleep.

Who Can Use This Protocol?

This routine can be helpful for:

- People who take a long time to fall asleep
- People who experience stress or anxiety at night
- People whose body feels tense before sleep

Preparation Before Starting

1. Switch off bright lights and reduce screen exposure 20–30 minutes before sleep.
2. Keep your room quiet, cool, and comfortable.
3. Lie down in a comfortable position on your bed.
4. Breathe slowly through your nose for 1–2 minutes before starting.

Full Progressive Muscle Relaxation Protocol

Step 1: Breathing Preparation (1–2 minutes)

- Take a slow deep breath through the nose for 4 seconds.
  - Hold gently for 2 seconds.
  - Exhale slowly through the mouth for 6 seconds.
- Repeat 5–6 times.

Step 2: Muscle Tension and Release Sequence

For each muscle group:

- Inhale and gently tense the muscle group for about 5–7 seconds.
- Do not strain or create pain.
- Exhale and fully relax for 10–15 seconds.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation.

Sequence to Follow:

1. Feet – Curl toes downward, hold, and release.
2. Calves – Tighten calves by pointing toes upward, hold, release.
3. Thighs – Tighten thighs gently, hold, release.
4. Hips and Glutes – Gently tighten, hold, release.
5. Abdomen – Pull stomach slightly inward, hold, release.
6. Chest – Take a deeper breath and hold mild tension, release.
7. Hands – Make fists, hold, release.
8. Forearms – Tighten forearms, hold, release.
9. Shoulders – Raise shoulders toward ears, hold, release.
10. Neck – Gently press head back into pillow (very mild), release.
11. Face – Tighten forehead and jaw gently, hold, release.

Step 3: Whole Body Relaxation (1–2 minutes)

- Take 3 slow breaths.
- Allow the body to feel heavy.
- Let your attention rest on breathing.

How Often to Practice

- Practice once daily before sleep.
- Most people notice improvement within 1–2 weeks of regular practice.

#### Important Tips

- Do not force tension.
- The goal is relaxation, not effort.
- If you feel discomfort, skip that muscle group.

#### Disclaimer

This technique is intended for general relaxation and sleep support purposes only.

It is not a medical treatment or a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

If you have chronic insomnia, severe anxiety, sleep apnea, cardiovascular conditions, muscle injuries, or neurological disorders, consult a qualified healthcare professional before practicing this technique.

Stop immediately if you feel pain, dizziness, or discomfort.

This protocol is based on widely studied relaxation methods used in behavioral sleep therapy and stress management programs.

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