

Head-to-Toe Relaxation

After you tense and release every part of your body, you'll feel lighter and less stressed.

1. Get into a comfortable position. You can sit or lie down.
2. Close your eyes, if you feel comfortable doing so. At first you'll need to keep your eyes open to read the instructions, of course, but once you get the hang of it you'll just remember what to do.
3. Focus on relaxing your entire body as much as possible.
4. Start by tensing your toes; curl them up into your feet and hold them tight for 3-5 seconds. Release them. Take a deep breath and repeat for another 3-5 seconds.
5. Next, tighten all your muscles from your feet up to your waist. Do a quick mental scan and make sure you have them all: your calves, your thighs, your bottom. Hold for 3-5 seconds, release and repeat.
6. Now do the same thing with your stomach. Tighten it as much as you can. Hold it. Then release and repeat.
7. Then do the same thing with your chest. Tighten, hold, release. Do this twice.
8. Now your whole torso, including your shoulders, which will probably lift slightly off the ground or away from your chair when you tense them.
9. Now move to your hands. Tighten them into fists, hold for a count of five and release. Repeat this two times.
10. Then tighten your entire arms, bending your fists back at the wrist. Hold for five seconds and release. Then repeat.
11. Tighten your neck by turning your head as far to the right as you can without feeling any discomfort and holding it for 3-5 seconds, then release. Repeat this one more time.
12. Do the same thing on the left.
13. Now scrunch and tighten your whole face and hold it for five seconds. Do this one more time and then you are done.

Now that you've tensed and released every part of your body, do a quick scan. How do you feel? Are there places you'd like to tense and release again for a little more relaxation? Go ahead and do that.

When you are ready, open your eyes and begin to slowly move around. Enjoy the calm feeling this activity is sure to bring!