

## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

### WHAT IS PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION?

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) has been found to be effective in reducing muscular tension, anxiety, sleep difficulties, fatigue, depression, and neck and back pain.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation will help you recognize the difference between tension and relaxation in each of the major muscle groups. Surprising as it may sound, these distinctions are easy to overlook. Once you can really feel the difference between a tense muscle and a deeply relaxed one, you will be able to identify your chronic trouble spots and consciously rid them of their locked-in tension. You will also be able to bring your muscles to a deeper state of relaxation after you tense them than you could have if you hadn't tensed them first.



### TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

- o As with all relaxation techniques, regular practice of progressive muscle relaxation will enhance the speed and depth of your relaxation.
- o Before you begin, get into a comfortable position in a quiet room where you won't be disturbed. You may want to loosen your clothing and remove your shoes.
- o Progressive Muscle Relaxation can be practiced lying down or in a chair. Each muscle or muscle group is tensed from five to seven seconds and then relaxed for twenty to thirty seconds. This procedure is repeated at least once.
- o As you tense and relax muscle groups, remember to notice the contrast between the sensations of tension and relaxation.
- o People new to this technique sometimes make the error of relaxing tension gradually. This slow-motion release of tension may look relaxed, but it actually requires sustained tension. When you release the tension in a particular muscle, let it go instantly; let your muscles become suddenly limp.
- o Caution should be taken in tensing the neck and back, because excessive tightening can result in muscle or spinal damage. Also, overtightening the toes or feet can result in muscle cramping.