

Passive Progressive Relaxation

Through Passive Progressive Relaxation, you can sequentially relax parts of the body by sending soothing messages one at a time, rather than requiring the muscle to work so that it will relax. Passive Progressive Relaxation combines a series of breaths and images to help you relax. Sometimes you'll breathe deeply, all the way into your belly, and sometimes you'll just use a regular breath. Give it a try!

- Find a comfortable posture, either seated, reclined, lying on the floor or bed.
- Take a deep breath. As you inhale, bring your attention to the top of your head. As you exhale, imagine all the muscles in your scalp letting go.
- Breathe deeply again and focus on your scalp. As you exhale, let go of all the muscles in your scalp.
- Breathe normally.
- When you are ready, breathe deeply again and as you inhale, bring your attention to the muscles in your face. As you exhale, let go of all the muscles in your face.
- Imagine that you are standing under a wonderfully soothing waterfall, cool, but not cold, and warm, but not hot. Feel the water gently massaging your scalp and face, rinsing all the stress away so that it drips off your fingertips.
- Take another deep breath and focus on any tension in your shoulders. As you exhale, let go of all the muscles in your shoulders. Imagine the water washing over your head, face and shoulders, just rinsing away the stress until it drips off your fingertips. Breathe normally as the stress washes away.
- When you are ready, breathe deeply in. As you inhale, focus on your back. As you exhale, imagine the waterfall washing away any stress or tension remaining there. Let your breath carry away any remnants of stress.
- Breathe deeply and focus on any tension in your arms. As you exhale, let go of all the muscles in your arms. Imagine the water washing over your head, face, shoulders, back and arms and rinsing away the stress until it drips off your fingertips. Breathe normally as the stress washes away.
- Take another deep breath directly into your torso and pelvis. As you exhale, let go of all the muscles in those areas.
- Breathe deeply again and focus on any tension in your legs. As you exhale, let go of all the muscles in your legs, knees, and shins. Imagine the water washing over your head, face, shoulders, back, arms, torso, pelvis, legs, knees and shins and rinsing away the stress until it drips off your toes. Breathe normally as the stress washes away.
- Take another deep breath. As you inhale, focus on your ankles, heels and feet. As you exhale, let go of any tension there.
- Breathe deeply one last time and focus on tension remaining in your head and face. As you exhale, imagine letting go of any stress there. Imagine the waterfall washing over your head, face, shoulders, back, arms, torso, pelvis, legs, knees and shins, ankles, heels and feet and rinsing away the stress until it drips off your fingers and toes.
- Breathe normally as you watch and feel the stress wash away.
- When you are ready, take one last breath and allow your eyes to open.

How did this form of relaxation work for you?

Do you feel any different using this strategy?
