

## Deep Muscle Relaxation

This exercise is designed to help you become aware of the differences between tension and relaxation in each of the major muscle groups.

1. Sit or lie comfortably and close your eyes. Become aware of how tense or relaxed your body is and pay attention to your body for a few moments.
2. Make a fist and tense your right hand. . Then tell your hands to become warm and heavy and help the suggestion by imagining things like a heavy weight tied to your hand or the sun beating down on it.
3. Next tense and relax your right forearm and then follow it up with suggestions and images for it to become heavy and warm. Then do the same with the upper arm should and then the right foot, lower leg, and upper leg. Your whole side should feel relaxed, heavy and warm.
4. Repeat the procedure with the left side. Your hands, arms, feet and leg should be relaxed, heavy and warm. Wait for these feelings, or repeat the procedure again. It may take a few repetitions before you can do this. When you have mastered heaviness and warmth, you may be able to relax the muscles without having to tense them first.
5. Now relax the muscles of the hips and imagine that a wave of relaxation is passing up from the abdomen to the chest. Imagine the wave coming in as you inhale, bringing deep relaxation and then imagine the wave receding as you exhale.

Do not tense these muscles. Tell the hips, the abdomen and the chest to become heavy and warm. Let each breathe become deeper, completely filling the abdomen. Wait for your breathing to become very deep before going on to the next state of the exercise.

6. Next, imagine as you inhale that a wave of relaxation is continuing into the shoulders, to the neck, the jaw the mouth, up the face and to the scalp. Relax each muscle group in turn imagining the relaxation passing over it.

7. Enjoy feeling the deep relaxation. In your mind's eye imagine that you are in a lovely, peaceful, safe, relaxing spot, without a care; in the world. Imagine the scene with all or your senses - feeling, hearing, smelling, seeing and even tasting what it is to be in your special place.
  
8. When you are ready to finish the exercise, take two deep breathes and then open your eyes. Sit quietly for a moment or two, then stretch your body and come back quietly back into the room.