

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

Introduction

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) according to Edmund Jacobson is a relaxation method in which muscle tension can be reduced and deep physical relaxation induced by consciously tensing and relaxing various parts of the body. The basic idea of this method is the conscious induction of muscular relaxation through the active change from a state of tension to a state of relaxation. In stressful situations, muscular tension often arises, which can be actively relaxed with the help of this method.

In PMR, various parts of the body are tensed in sequence, the muscle tension is held and then released. The focus here is on the physical sensations that arise during the change from tension to relaxation. As with all relaxation techniques, PMR requires regular practice. In order to benefit from the positive effects of a relaxation method in the long term, it is necessary to practice it regularly on a daily or weekly basis. PMR, along with other relaxation techniques such as autogenic training, is an effective relaxation technique that is independent of location and situation.

Instruction

When performing PMR, please be careful not to overwork your muscles. Try to find your own rhythm. Preferably do the exercises several times a week in short sessions, rather than irregular high-intensity sessions. Below are numerous muscle areas that can be focused on. You get to choose which ones you want to specifically include in your exercise and which ones you leave out. During relaxation exercises, you may have distracting thoughts running through your mind. This is normal. Take note of these thoughts but try not to judge them and return your attention to the exercise at hand.

Basic principle of progressive muscle relaxation:

Systematic contraction and relaxation of various muscle groups with

- a) Mindfulness phase of approx. 15 seconds for each muscle part: observe how the respective muscles feel in the current state.
- b) Tensioning phase of max. 10 seconds for each muscle part: Tension should be noticeable, but without excessive effort, while continuing to breathe normally.
- c) Relaxation phase of approx. 30 seconds for each muscle part: release tension completely, perceive and feel sensations compared to before.

Focus: Hands

- Clench the left hand into a fist and observe the feeling of tension (5- 10 seconds).
- Relax the left hand and observe the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).
- Repeat the same with the right hand.

Focus: Arms

- Clench both hands into fists, bring them to your shoulders and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).
- Lower the arms again, place them on the thighs and observe the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).

Focus: Shoulders

- Pull both shoulders up as if to touch your ears with them and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).
- Now drop the shoulders again and observe the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).

Focus: Forehead

- Raise your eyebrows, wrinkle your forehead and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).
- Relax your forehead again and notice the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).

Focus: Eyes

- Press your eyelids very tightly and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).
- Relax your eyelids again and notice the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).

Focus: Lips

- Press the lips firmly together and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).
- Relax the lips again and observe the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).

Focus: Back

- Make a hollow back, pull your shoulders back and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).
- Now relax back into the chair and observe the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).

Focus: abdomen

- Tighten the abdominal muscles and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).
- Relax the abdominal muscles again and observe the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).

Focus: Glutes

- Tense the gluteal muscles and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).
- Relax the gluteal muscles again and observe the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).

Focus: Thighs

- Raise both legs slightly, make yourself completely long by stretching out the tips of the feet and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).

- Put your legs back down and observe the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).

Focus: Calves and shins

- Lift both legs again, pull the tops of the feet in the direction of the head and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).
- Put the legs back down and observe the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).

Focus: Feet

- Flex your toes and observe the feeling of tension (5-10 seconds).
- Relax the toes again and observe the difference between tension and relaxation (30 seconds).