

## Triangle Breathing & Progressive Muscle Relaxation

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These techniques are great to use to help teach your client how to manage their anxiety. They can also be used for relaxation and stress managements. I often will use them at the beginning or ending of a session, as well.



**Breathing Technique:** Here is a simple breathing technique. It's called TRIANGLE BREATHING.

1. Inhale for 3 SLOW seconds
2. HOLD IT for 3 SLOW seconds
3. Exhale completely for 3 SLOW seconds.
4. Repeat 3 times.

**Progressive Muscular Relaxation (PMR):** Progressive Muscular Relaxation is useful for relaxing your body when your muscles are tense. The idea behind PMR is that you tense up a group of muscles so that they are as tightly contracted as possible. Hold them in a state of extreme tension for a few seconds. Then, relax the muscles to their previous state. Finally, consciously relax the muscles even further so that you are as relaxed as possible. By tensing your muscles first, you will probably find that you are able to relax your muscles more than would be the case if you tried to relax your muscles directly.

**Instructions:** Tense each muscle group for at least five seconds and then relax for at least 30 seconds. Repeat before moving to the next muscle group.

- **Upper part of your face.** Lift your eyebrows toward the ceiling, feeling the tension in your forehead and scalp. Relax. Repeat.
- **Central part of your face.** Squint your eyes tightly and wrinkle your nose and mouth, feeling the tension in the center of your face. Relax. Repeat.
- **Lower part of your face.** Clench your teeth and pull back the corners of your mouth toward your ears. Show your teeth like a snarling dog. Relax. Repeat.
- **Neck.** Gently touch your chin to your chest. Feel the pull in the back of your neck as it spreads into your head. Relax. Repeat.
- **Shoulders.** Pull your shoulders up toward your ears, feeling the tension in your shoulders, head, neck and upper back. Relax. Repeat.
- **Upper arms.** Pull your arms back and press your elbows in toward the sides of your body. Try not to tense your lower arms. Feel the tension in your arms, shoulders and into your back. Relax. Repeat.
- **Hands and lower arms.** Make a tight fist and pull up your wrists. Feel the tension in your hands, knuckles and lower arms. Relax. Repeat.
- **Chest, shoulders, and upper back.** Pull your shoulders back as if you're trying to make your shoulder blades touch. Relax. Repeat.
- **Stomach.** Pull your stomach in toward your spine, tightening your abdominal muscles. Relax. Repeat.
- **Upper legs.** Squeeze your knees together and lift your legs up off the chair or from wherever you're relaxing. Feel the tension in your thighs. Relax. Repeat.
- **Lower legs.** Raise your feet toward the ceiling while flexing them toward your body. Feel the tension in your calves. Relax. Repeat.
- **Feet.** Turn your feet inward and curl your toes up and out. Relax. Repeat.

Perform progressive muscle relaxation at least once or twice each day to get the maximum benefit. Each session should last about 10 minutes.