**Relaxing Your Body  
Dr. Marsha Fralick  
College and Career Success, 10th Edition**

Stress creates tension in the body. You can use progressive muscle relaxation to relax your body to deal with stress or to get ready for sleeping. This exercise involves tensing and relaxing your muscles. To do this exercise, sit in a comfortable chair or lie down on your bed and close your eyes. Begin by taking a few deep breaths and then tense your muscles for five to 10 seconds and then relax them for ten seconds. Notice the difference between tension and relaxation. Here are some areas you can tense and relax. You can modify or eliminate any exercises that may cause discomfort.

* Close your eyes tightly and tense all the muscles in your face, hold, and relax.
* Bring your shoulders up toward your ears, squeeze them, hold, and relax.
* Pull your shoulders back as far as you can, hold, and relax.
* Make a fist with your hands and squeeze tightly, hold, and relax.
* Keep your hands in a fist and raise them toward your shoulders. Tense your arm muscles, hold, release, and relax.
* Hold your stomach in as tight as you can, pushing your belly button toward your spine. Hold and relax.
* Arch your back and feel the tension in your lower back, hold, and relax.
* Squeeze your buttock muscles, hold, and relax.
* Raise your heels and tense your calf muscles, hold, and relax.
* Keeping your legs straight, flex your toes toward your head, stretching your calf muscles. Hold and relax.
* Curl your toes tightly, hold, and relax.
* Point your toes down and dig your toes into the floor, hold, and relax.
* Beginning with your head and progressing toward your toes, tighten all the muscles in your body at one time hold, and relax. Feel the relaxation throughout your body.

For a live demo, go to “Reduce Stress Through Progressive Muscle Relaxation” on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/ClqPtWzozXs?si=cEVWxWj-8y08jFUL> .