

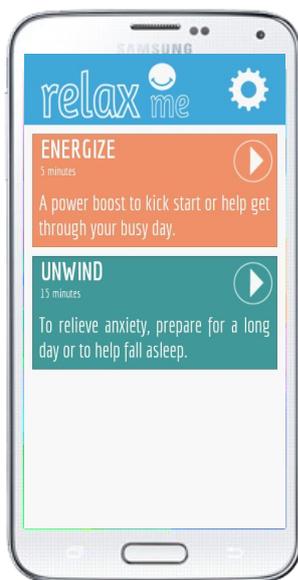
PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a pain and stress management technique with many benefits, both physical and emotional. It's been shown to be effective in many studies as a stress-management tool; recent research shows that, used regularly, it can lead to a decrease in measured levels of the hormone, cortisol, that's often associated with stress.

It's also very helpful to relieve the tight muscles associated with RSI and with chronic pain.

PMR is a technique in which you first tighten and then relax major muscle groups in a fixed order, breathing in as you tighten and out as you relax.

For example, many PMR guided meditations start by having you tighten and relax your arms, then your shoulders, head and neck, chest, abdomen and legs in that order. You can relax your muscles in any order you prefer but it definitely helps if you get used to the same order every time.



PMR is not at all difficult or complicated. First, choose a time and a place where you won't be interrupted or disturbed, and turn off your phone. It's best to choose a time when you don't feel sleepy, as PMR can make you so relaxed you may go to sleep. (Of course, you can use it in bed at night when you want to go to sleep.) You will need to set aside about 10 minutes.

Lie down on the floor, with perhaps your knees and your neck supported by cushions if that makes you more comfortable. You can also sit up straight in a chair. If the room is at all cool, cover yourself with a light blanket – relaxation can make you feel colder.

The easiest way to carry out PMR is to have a voice guide, either through a CD, a YouTube video or an app. "Relax-me" is a fairly basic PMR app that is free to download and there are plenty of free guided PMR scripts on YouTube. The ABC also has a free guided PMR that

