



Jacobson's Ladder of Relaxation (Progressive Muscle Relaxation)

Jacobson's relaxation technique is meditation exercise that focuses on tightening and relaxing specific muscle groups in sequence. Another name for the technique is progressive relaxation therapy. Concentrating on specific areas of the body by tensing and then relaxing allows you to tune into your physical sensations – allowing you to be more aware of how your body is responding to your environment.

Dr. Edmund Jacobson invented the technique in the 1920s to help patients deal with anxiety. Dr. Jacobson believed that consciously relaxing the muscles would calm the mind as well. The technique is simple. You simply tighten one muscle group while keeping the rest of the body relaxed. Then you release the tension and move to another part of the body.

Practicing the technique:

1. Take a deep breath in and tighten a particular muscle group such as your feet, hands, calves, or shoulders, etc.
2. Exhale slowly, relax and release the muscle group.
3. Move to a different muscle group and repeat the steps.

The technique is designed to make you aware of the distinction between relaxed and tensed muscle groups. When you are stressed due to being exposed to fear, anxiety, stress, etc. you are better equipped to sense it, know where your body is holding the emotion, and consciously relax that part of the body. Because the mind and body work in tandem with one another, relaxing your body can soothe your mind and emotions.

NOTE: This is a *practice*. If you do not practice this when you are not in crisis, you will not have maximal benefits when you in crisis.