Progressive Relaxation Script

“As we progress through each muscle group, you will first tense for approximately 5 – 7 seconds and then relax for 30-40 seconds. Do not start the tensing until I say "NOW". Continue to tense until I say "OK".

"Begin with tensing the muscles in the dominant hand and lower arm by making a tight fist NOW. Feel the tension in the hand, over the knuckles, and up into the lower arm....OK, relax by simply letting go of the tension. Notice the difference between tension and relaxation.[pause 20-30 seconds]. OK, relax. Just let the relaxation happen; don’t put out any effort. [Pause 25-30 seconds]

"Next tense the muscle of the dominant biceps by pushing your elbow down against the floor or back of the chair. Tense NOW. Feel the tension in the biceps without involving the muscles in the lower arm and hand....OK, relax and let it go. Just let it happen.....Tense the biceps NOW....OK, release it. Notice the difference between tension and letting go into relaxation."

"With your nondominant hand, make a fist almost as tight as you can NOW. Feel the tension in your hand and lower arm....OK, slowly relax draining all of the tension out....NOW tense again....OK relax and feel the difference between the tension and relaxation. Also notice the different feeling for each new muscle group. NOW push the elbow down to tighten the nondominant biceps ...OK, relax....NOW tense the biceps again....OK, notice the decrease in tension, drain it all out, and enjoy the feeling of relaxation...Notice the sensations you have in the muscles of both arms and hands...Perhaps there is a sort of flow of relaxation-perhaps a feeling of warmth and even heaviness in these muscles of both arms and hands....Perhaps there is a sort of flow of relaxation-perhaps a feeling of warmth and even heaviness in these muscles. Notice and enjoy this feeling of relaxation."

"Turn your attention to the muscles in your face. We will relax the face by progressing through three muscle groups. Begin by lifting the eyebrows just as high as you can NOW. Feel the tension your forehead and scalp [pause for only 3- to 5- seconds contractions with these smaller muscle group]. OK, relax. Enjoy the spreading sensation of relaxation....NOW from again....OK, relax. Release all the tensions....Your forehead should feel smooth as glass...."

"Next squint your eyes very tightly and at the same time wrinkle up your nose. Tense NOW. Can you feel the tension in the upper part of the cheeks and through the eyes? OK, relax....NOW tense again....OK, release all the tension...."

"Next pull the corners of your mouth back and clinch your teeth, but not so hard that your teeth hurt. Tense NOW. You should feel tension all through the lower part of your face and jaw. OK, relax...."

"Next tense and relax the muscle of the neck by trying to pull your chin downward toward your chest but at the same time preventing the chin from touching. That is, counter the contraction of the muscles in the front part of the neck with the contraction of the muscles in the back part of neck. NOW tense. You may feel a bit of shaking or trembling in the neck muscles as you tense them. OK, relax. Drain all the tension from the muscles in the neck....See if you can get your neck and face to feel completely relaxed. NOW tense from the muscles in the neck....See if you can get your neck and face to feel completely relaxed. NOW tense to neck again. Feel the discomfort...OK, relax. Drain all the tension out....Remember relaxation is simply the absence of tension...."

"Take a deep breath and hold it while raising your shoulders upward toward your ears. Tense NOW. Feel significant tension in the chest, the shoulders, and the upper back...OK, relax. Drain all the tension out....NOW hold your breath and raise your shoulder again. This may be a familiar sensation as most athletes raise their shoulders and/or hold their breath when they are uptight. OK, drain all the tension out. Let your shoulders drop completely. Enjoy the spreading sensation of relaxation...."

"Next, tighten your abdomen as through you expect a punch while simultaneously squeezing the buttocks together. Tense NOW. You should feel a good deal of tightness and tension in the stomach and buttocks....OK, release the tension, gradually letting it all drain out. Just let it happen....NOW tense again....OK relax. Feel the sensation of relaxation spreading into those muscles...."

"Turn your attention to your right leg. Tighten the muscles in your right thigh by simultaneously contracting all the muscles of your thigh. Tense NOW. Try to localize the tension only to your thigh.....Note the sensation. OK, relax. Contrast the tension and relaxation sensations. Remember relaxation is merely the absence of tension; it takes no effort except merely releasing the tension...NOW tighten the right thigh again....OK, release the tension-just passively let it drain out. Enjoy the feeling of relaxation...."

"Next flex your ankle as through you are trying to touch your toes to your shin. Tense NOW. You should be feeling tension all through your calf, ankle, and foot. Contrast this tension with when you tensed the thigh. OK, relax. Simply release the tension; let go of any remaining tension....NOW tense again....OK slowly release all the tension...."

"Tense the muscle in you right foot by either pointing the toes or curling your toes tightly inside your shoes but don’t tense very hard or you might cramp the muscles. Tense NOW. Particularly note the sensation of tension in your arch and ball of the foot. OK, relax. As all the tension drains out, feel the spreading sensation of relaxation.... And perhaps warmth, heaviness, or even tingling. All of these sensations are normal. NOW tense again....OK, slowly release all the tension. Let your foot ankle and calf feel very relaxed...."

"We will go through the same sequence with the left leg [provide appropriate commentary during the tensing and relaxation pauses]. Begin by tensing all the muscles of your left thigh NOW....OK, relax....NOW tense again....OK, release the tension."

"NOW flex your left ankle as through you are trying to touch your toes to your shin....OK, release the tension....NOW flex again....OK relax...."

"NOW point or curl your toes....OK, release the tension....NOW tense again....OK relax....Both your left and right legs should feel very relaxed. If you feel any tension anywhere in your legs simply release it."

"Relax all the muscles of your body-let them all go limp. You should be breathing slowly and deeply. Let all last traces of tension drain out of your body. Scan your body. Scan your body for any places that might still feel tension. Wherever you feel tension, do an additional tense and relax. You may notice a sensation of warmth and heaviness throughout your body, as though you are sinking deeper and deeper into the light as air, as though your are sinking deeper and deeper into the chair or floor. Or you may feel as though you are as light as air, as though you are floating on a cloud. Whatever feeling you have, go with them....Enjoy the sensation of relaxation...."

"Before opening your eyes, take a deep breath and feel the energy and alertness flowing back into your body. Stretch your arms and legs if you wish. Open your eyes when you are ready."