

Muscle Relaxation Exercises

These exercises are not designed to create pain. If you feel pain when doing any of the steps, stop immediately.

Caution: Before doing any exercise, check with your physician. If you have or have had neck, shoulder, or back injuries or pain, do not do these exercises without consulting a physician.

Brief Neck and Shoulder Muscle Relaxation Exercise

Preparation:

1. Sit straight but comfortably in a chair, without crossing legs, arms, hands, or feet.
2. You can have your eyes open or closed, but closed helps reduce distractions. You may feel a little tension with each exercise step, but you should not feel pain.
3. This short exercise can be done just prior to studying or taking a test to help your relax.

Exercise

1. Tilt your head to the left, without straining or pushing, just as far as it will naturally go without any pain. *Breathe deeply once.*
Raise your head and face forward. *Breathe.*
2. Tilt your head to the right, without straining or pushing, just as far as it will naturally go without any pain. *Breathe.*
Raise your head and face forward. *Breathe.*
3. Turn your head to the left, without straining or pushing, just as far as it will naturally go without any pain. *Breathe.*
Raise your head and face forward. *Breathe.*
4. Lean your head to the left, as if you are going to lay it on your left shoulder. Go only as far as your head and neck with allow without pain. *Breathe.*
Raise your head and face forward. *Breathe.*
5. Lean your head to the right, as if you are going to lay it on your right shoulder. Go only as far as your head and neck with allow without pain. *Breathe.*
Raise your head and face forward. *Breathe.*
6. Now, raise your shoulders as if you are going to touch your shoulders to the bottoms of your ears. Hold for 2-3 seconds. *Breathe.*
Relax and slowly lower your shoulders. *Breathe.*
7. Repeat any of the parts if you still feel tension in them.

Other Resources for Relaxation Exercises

Mayo Clinic. Stress Management. Relaxation techniques: Learn ways to reduce your stress. This website offers alternative methods of relaxation and videos to give the viewer practice in some of them. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/relaxation-technique/SR00007>

The University of Wollongong in Dubai has one with a very clear description of a longer Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise at

http://www.uowdubai.ac.ae/pdfs/ss/counselling/20081029_ProgressiveMuscula%20Relaxation.pdf?PHPSESSID=a866b4f30d848b61e0195b8766d092f5