

## Muscle Relaxation

This is a longer relaxation, focusing on sensations in different parts of your body. With practice, you can learn to observe and let go of tension in your muscles, and feel more relaxed. Begin by practicing in a seated position. Finding a comfortable posture, with your feet on the floor, sitting upright with your back supported and your hands resting on your lap. If you are lying down, find a restful position on your back, with your legs stretched out and arms by your sides. You can use pillows or cushions to keep yourself comfortable. And now, turn your attention to what you can feel in your body.

Start by observing one of your hands. Noticing sensations in your thumb, your index finger, middle finger, ring finger and little finger, your palm and the back of your hand. You may feel warmth, numbness, tingling. You may feel sensations more clearly in some parts of your hand than others. Now if you want to, clench your hand into a fist. Notice what you can feel as you squeeze the muscles tightly. Let go and allow the muscles of the hand to relax. Notice how the muscles feel when they are relaxed. And now, turning your attention to your other hand. Notice sensations in your thumb, your index finger, middle finger, ring finger and little finger, your palm and the back of your hand. This time, without tensing first, allow the muscles in this hand to relax.

Having practiced with your hands, moving now through different parts of the body. Without tensing the muscles, notice sensations and allow the muscles to relax. Starting at the top of your head, noticing sensations in your face.

Softening the muscles in your forehead, your eyes, your mouth and jaw. Noticing sensations in your head and neck, allowing any tension to melt away. Letting your shoulders ease down. Sensing this relaxation as a wave, flowing down through your arms and into your hands. Allowing your chest to move gently as you breathe in and out. Soften and relax your tummy.

At the back of your body, the soothing wave flows from the top of your head, down your back and into your pelvis and hips. Relaxing the muscles in your thighs, your legs and in your feet. Imagining any tension flowing out through your feet and into the ground below you.

You may want to return to the top of your head. Allowing warm waves of relaxation to flow down, loosening any tightness you feel in your body. Continuing to flow down through your body, relaxing muscles from top to toe.

And now letting go of this flowing wave. Sensing your whole body sitting on your chair, or lying down. Resting comfortably in this space for the next few moments. You may want to send yourself a little thank you for taking this time, observing what you are experiencing in this moment.

Now it's time to slowly come back to being here, in this room. Keeping your eyes closed, notice the seat of your chair or the surface you're lying on. Feel how solid it is, how supported you are. Hear the sounds around you. When you are ready, open your eyes and start making small movements, as this relaxation comes to a close.

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