



There are two reasons our mind moves about: the breath and the vasanas (deep-seated emotional desires). If one is controlled, then the other could be controlled easily. Of these two, the breath should be controlled first.

- Yogakundali Upanishad

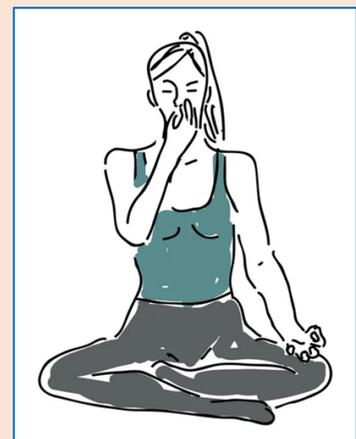
control your breath  
Control your mind

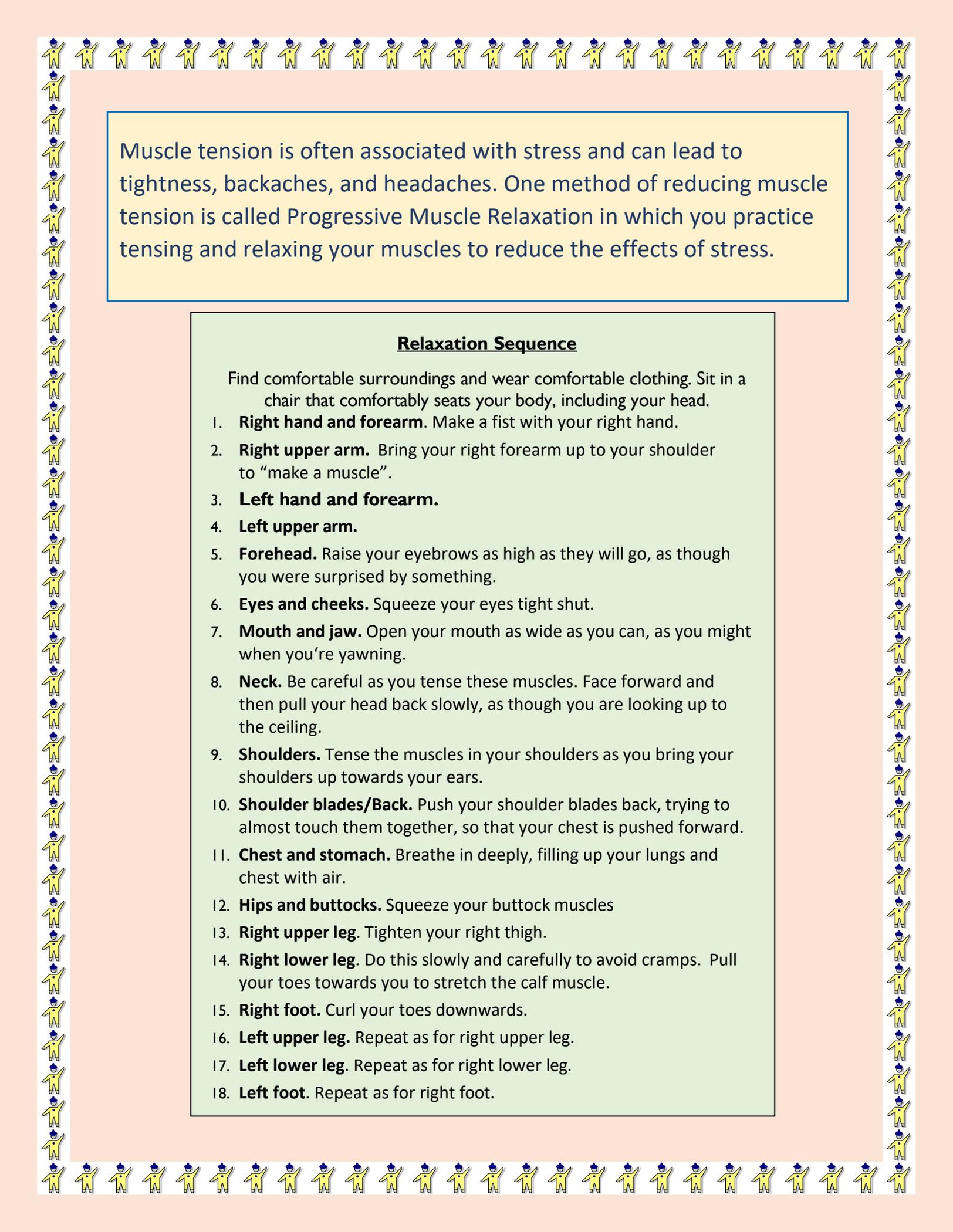
Close your right nostril with your thumb and inhale slowly and deeply through your left nostril.

Release your thumb and close your left nostril with your ring finger and exhale slowly through the right nostril.

Practice it in reverse, now inhaling through the right nostril and exhaling through the left.

Breath is linked to our autonomic nervous system. Regular breathing practice activates our parasympathetic nervous system, which is associated with our peaceful mind and body. This reduces our stress and anxiety by regulating body's cortisol level.





Muscle tension is often associated with stress and can lead to tightness, backaches, and headaches. One method of reducing muscle tension is called Progressive Muscle Relaxation in which you practice tensing and relaxing your muscles to reduce the effects of stress.

### Relaxation Sequence

Find comfortable surroundings and wear comfortable clothing. Sit in a chair that comfortably seats your body, including your head.

1. **Right hand and forearm.** Make a fist with your right hand.
2. **Right upper arm.** Bring your right forearm up to your shoulder to “make a muscle”.
3. **Left hand and forearm.**
4. **Left upper arm.**
5. **Forehead.** Raise your eyebrows as high as they will go, as though you were surprised by something.
6. **Eyes and cheeks.** Squeeze your eyes tight shut.
7. **Mouth and jaw.** Open your mouth as wide as you can, as you might when you’re yawning.
8. **Neck.** Be careful as you tense these muscles. Face forward and then pull your head back slowly, as though you are looking up to the ceiling.
9. **Shoulders.** Tense the muscles in your shoulders as you bring your shoulders up towards your ears.
10. **Shoulder blades/Back.** Push your shoulder blades back, trying to almost touch them together, so that your chest is pushed forward.
11. **Chest and stomach.** Breathe in deeply, filling up your lungs and chest with air.
12. **Hips and buttocks.** Squeeze your buttock muscles
13. **Right upper leg.** Tighten your right thigh.
14. **Right lower leg.** Do this slowly and carefully to avoid cramps. Pull your toes towards you to stretch the calf muscle.
15. **Right foot.** Curl your toes downwards.
16. **Left upper leg.** Repeat as for right upper leg.
17. **Left lower leg.** Repeat as for right lower leg.
18. **Left foot.** Repeat as for right foot.