

## **Progressive Muscle Relaxation: Beginner**

1. Begin with a few abdominal breaths. Silently say the word “relax” as you breathe out slowly.

2. Tense and release each muscle group in the order presented below. Remember to tense and release each set of muscles twice before moving on to the next group. Progressive muscle relaxation usually moves from the top of the body (head and face) to the bottom (feet and toes). Sometimes it starts with the hands and arms because they are easy to tighten separately from other muscle areas, and then moves top to bottom

### **Face/Head/Neck**

- Clench your teeth and pull the corners of your mouth back in a forced smile - release.
- Press your lips together tightly - release.
- Close your eyes tightly - release.
- Open your eyes as wide as you can - release.
- Wrinkle your forehead and brow- release.
- Press your head to your right shoulder – release; then to your left. - release
- Press your chin toward your chest - release.
- Tilt your head gently towards your back (not too far)- release.

### **Shoulders**

- Raise your shoulders up toward your ears in a big shrug - release.

### **Hands/Arms**

- Tighten your hands into fists- release.
- Bend both hands back at the wrist to tense the muscles in the backs of your hands and forearms- release.
- Clench both fists and bring them toward your shoulders to tighten the bicep muscles in your upper arms - release.
- Press your hands firmly into the surface where you are practicing. – release

### **Chest/Back**

- Take a deep breath, puffing out your chest, and hold it briefly - release.
- Round your back and move your shoulders toward the front – release

### **Stomach/Bottom**

- Gently tighten your abdomen (tummy area) – release; this can be a tender area if you have active iBD symptoms
- Tighten your buttocks and feel yourself lift up a bit on the chair - release.

### **Legs/Feet/Toes**

- Press the soles of your feet into the floor (press your heels if you're lying down). - release
- Stretch out both legs in front of you, pointing your toes away from you- release. You may choose to stretch out one leg at a time, especially if you have any low back problems.
- Stretch out each leg in front of you and point your toes toward the ceiling (tightens your calf muscles) - release
- Curl your toes together – release
- Stretch your toes out wide – release.

3. As you finish going through the last muscle group, remain sitting quietly for some additional minutes, breathing comfortably. It is ok to have your eyes closed. Notice the sensations in your body – especially any releasing and relaxing.

4. Slowly count backward from “5” to “1” in your mind, becoming gradually more awake and alert with each number. When you reach “1”, open your eyes and enjoy the feeling of being awake and relaxed.