

# Muscle Relaxation. ∞

Some situations you experience in hospital may make you feel nervous. I am going to teach you some special relaxation exercises that can help you to feel calmer. You can use these exercises whenever you are feeling uptight or nervous. It is best if you are able to sit in a comfortable chair, but you can also do them while in bed. You will need to squeeze tight the muscles in each of the following body parts, hold it while you count to 8 and then relax it.



## How do I relax my hands?

Pretend you have a tennis ball in your left hand. Squeeze the ball really hard. Feel the tightness in your hand and arm. Count to 8 while you squeeze, then let go and relax. Let your hand and arm go all floppy and soft. Doesn't it feel good now?! Take the ball in your right hand and do the same.

## How do I relax my arms and shoulders?

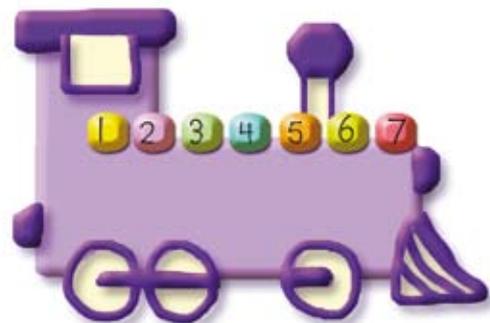
Pretend you are a weight lifter in the Olympic Games. Your arm muscles are very strong. Flex your muscles and show us how big they are. Hold this position while you count to 8, then relax. See how good your arms feel when they relax.

## How do I relax my shoulders?

Now pretend that you are just waking up and you are having your morning stretch. Stretch your arms right up to the sky, as far as you can reach. Count to 8, then relax. Let your arms drop down to your sides and relax. Notice how good they feel when they are soft and floppy.

## How do I relax my jaw?

Pretend that you have just bitten into a hard biscuit. It is really hard. Bite down on it. Use your neck and jaw muscles. Then relax. You still haven't managed to bite some off. Have another go and bit really hard. Harder! Yes, you have managed to bite some off. Now relax as the biscuit melts in your mouth.



### How do I relax my face?

Pretend that a little butterfly has landed on your nose. Try to get him off without using your hands. Screw up your nose and try to get him to fly away. Screw your nose up really tightly and count to 8. Great, he has flown away. Oh, no, he has landed on your forehead! Wrinkle up your whole face and count to 8. Great, he has gone for good now. Relax. Your face now feels smooth and relaxed.



### How do I relax my stomach?

Pretend that you are trying on a pair of jeans that have been given to you. You are trying to do the button up, but they are too tight around the waist. You squeeze your tummy muscles in while you try to do up the button. You just can't get them done up. Relax. Try again. Suck your tummy in tightly and count to 8. Relax. You decide that it is not worth trying to do them up any more as they are too small for you. See how good your stomach feels when it is relaxed!

### How do I relax my legs and feet?

Pretend that you are lying on the soft sand at the beach. Wiggle your toes in the sand. You can feel the warm sand moving between your toes. Dig your toes into the sand. Push your heels down into the sand and count to 8. Relax. Squish your toes into the sand again and press your feet into the sand. Relax. See how good they feel when they are relaxed.

### Well done!

You have relaxed all your body parts. Try to stay relaxed now. Let all your muscles go soft and floppy.

Keep your eyes closed while you let all your muscles relax. Think about how good it feels to work hard then relax. If you feel sleepy, let yourself drift off to sleep.

If you are not sleepy, open your eyes and gently start to wriggle.



**Congratulations, you are a really good relaxer!**