



JPMRT: AN EFFECTIVE MEASURE TO REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY

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“Mental health affects every aspect of your life. It’s not just this neat little issue you can put into a box.”

– Shannon Purser

ABSTRACT

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Over the course of life, each and every person experience mental health problems in one or other way, this will influence their thinking, mood, and behavior. It will also affect their physical as well as mental health which lead to stress, anxiety and many physical symptoms. These events can affect physically or psychologically and will cause health related issues. So, it is better to prevent these occurrences by various measures whether by engaging in diversional therapy, meditations, yoga, exercises and relaxation techniques. Jacobson’s Progressive Muscle Relaxation Technique is proving measure to reduce health related issues by inducing sleep, refreshing by relaxation, reducing stress and anxiety.

KEYWORDS: Stress, Anxiety, Relaxation, Pregnancy

INTRODUCTION

A healthy mind can lead to a healthy body. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

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DEFINITION

Jacobson’s relaxation technique is a type of progressive relaxation therapy that focuses on tightening and relaxing specific muscle groups in sequence. By concentrating on specific areas of muscles, tensing and then relaxing them, one can become more aware of one’s own body and physical sensations. Dr. Edmund Jacobson invented

the technique in the 1920s as a way to help patients deal with anxiety. He felt that relaxing the muscles could relax the mind as well. The technique involves tightening one muscle group while keeping the rest of the body relaxed, and then releasing the tension.

BENEFITS

Practicing relaxation techniques can have a variety of health benefits, such as:

- relieving anxiety;
- reducing work-related stress;
- lowering your blood pressure reducing the likelihood of seizures improving sleep.

EVIDENCE BASED STUDIES

Research shows a connection between relaxation and blood pressure, perhaps because stress is a contributing factor to high blood pressure. Research both old and new provides some evidence that Jacobson’s relaxation technique may help people with epilepsy reduce the amount and frequency of their seizures. In some cases, people who didn’t get more sleep still felt better rested after relaxation therapy.



Research has shown that PMR offers a range of benefits, including pain relief and better sleep. It may also reduce migraine attacks, systolic blood pressure. Migraine is a neurological condition that causes intense pain in your face and head. Migraine attacks can be triggered by stress, including normal everyday stressors.

An interventional study conducted by Kyriakoula Merakou, Konstantinos Tsoukas, Georgios Stavrinou, Eirini Amanaki, Antonia Daleziou, Ntina Kourmoussi, Georgia Stamatelopoulou, Evi Spourdalaki, Anastasia Barbouni in 2019 on 50 unemployed individuals to assess the Effect of Progressive Muscle Relaxation on Emotional Competence: Depression-Anxiety-Stress, Sense of Coherence, Health-Related Quality of Life, and Well-Being of Unemployed People in Greece found that PMR reduced symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. At the same time, it improved feelings of well-being and quality of life.¹

In 2020 a randomized clinical trial conducted by Mehdi Harorani, Fahimeh Davodabady, Behnam Masmouei, Niloofar Barati to assess the effect of progressive muscle relaxation on anxiety and sleep quality in 80 burn patients. These patients often experience high anxiety and poor sleep quality due to their physical and psychological conditions. The patients were divided into two groups. One group did PMR for 20 to 30 minutes a day, 3 days in a row. The other group just received routine care and treatment. After 3 days, the researchers determined that the patients who did PMR showed a significant decrease in anxiety and an improvement in sleep quality compared to the group who only received routine care.²

Patients with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) will experience high levels of anxiety and low sleep quality due to isolation treatment. Some sleep-improving drugs may inhibit the respiratory system and worsen the condition. Prolonged bedside instruction may increase the risk of medical infections. Kai Liu, Ying Chen, Duozi Wu, Ruzheng Lin, Zaisheng Wang, Liqing 2019 Pan conducted a randomized controlled clinical trial to investigate the effect of progressive muscle relaxation on anxiety and sleep quality of COVID-19, a total of 51 patients who entered the isolation ward were included in the study and randomly divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group used progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) technology for 30 min per day for 5 consecutive days. During this period, the control group received only routine care and treatment. The study concluded that Progressive muscle relaxation as an auxiliary method can reduce anxiety and improve sleep quality in patients with COVID-19.³

According to a study conducted by Bianca Meyer, Armin Keller, Hans-Georg Wöhlbier, Claudia Helene Overath, Britta Müller, and Peter Kropp 2016, PMR can decrease the frequency of migraine episodes. The researchers believe it helps by balancing levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that's often low in people with migraine.⁴

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) helps to improve the emotional state of antenatal mothers with stress and anxiety, which is necessary to keep the fetus healthy inside the womb.

Singaravelu Rajeswari and Nallepalli Sanjeeva Reddy conducted a randomized controlled study from May 2015 to June 2017 with 250 primigravidae to assess the Efficacy of

Progressive Muscle Relaxation on Pregnancy Outcome among Anxious Indian Primi Mothers. The study suggests that PMR practice is useful during pregnancy to decrease stress, anxiety, and for reducing the occurrence of postpartum complications.⁵

Pregnancy may be accompanied by serious physiological and psychological changes as it is a stressful period in a woman's life. Azam Sadeghi, Masoud Sirati-Nir, Abbas Ebadi, Matin Aliasgari, and Zahra Hajiamini conducted a clinical trial on 60 primigravida women in Iran to determine the effect of progressive muscle relaxation on pregnant women's general health. The results showed the effectiveness of progressive muscle relaxation on pregnant women's general health, the prenatal clinics can include a training program for progressive muscle relaxation in the routine training programs for pregnant women.⁶

Progressive relaxation therapy is generally safe and doesn't require a professional guidance. Sessions typically last no more than 20-30 minutes, making it manageable for people with busy schedules. Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing then relaxing muscles, one by one. This may help ease stress and anxiety.

STEPS

Sit in a quiet and comfortable area. Avoid holding breath, which can cause more tension. Inhale deeply when you tense your muscles and exhale fully when you relax. Wear loose, light weight clothing.

- Start by lying or sitting down. Relax the entire body. Take five deep & slow breaths.
- Lift the toes upward. Hold, then let go. Pull the toes downward. Hold, then relax.
- Next, tense the calf muscles, then let go.
- Move your knees toward each other. Hold, then let go.
- Squeeze your thigh muscles. Hold, then relax it.
- Clench your hands. Pause, then release.
- Tense your arms. Hold, then let go.
- Squeeze your buttocks. Pause, then let go.
- Contract your abdominal muscles. Pause, then release the tension.
- Inhale and tighten your chest. Hold, then exhale and let go.
- Raise the shoulders to your ears. Pause, then let go.
- Purse your lips together. Hold, then release.
- Open your mouth wide. Hold, then let go.
- Close your eyes tightly. Pause, then release.
- Lift eyebrows. Hold, then release.

After completing relax the whole body completely. Keep your eyes closed and let yourself remain in the relax position. Open your eyes and enjoy renewed energy, feel relaxed and refreshed.

CONCLUSION

In everyday life each and every person is facing some kind of stress whether related to study, career, work place, professional role, health related or familial issues, social adjustments. These events can affect physically or psychologically and will cause health related issues. So it is



better to prevent these occurrences by various measures whether by engaging in diversional therapy, meditations, yoga, exercises and relaxation techniques. Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation Technique is proving to reduce health related issues by encouraging relaxation, inducing sleep and generating freshness and new energy.

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