

## Mindfulness Activity: Tense and Release Muscle Relaxation

The **tense and release** muscle relaxation is an exercise that relaxes the mind and body by progressively tensing and releasing those large muscle groups. In this activity, you will gently tense and then release each large muscle group without straining too hard. Try to tense each muscle for approximately 5 seconds for the best results.

This activity is perfect because it helps the body **release tension**. Have your child try this activity lying down after they get into bed for the night. Starting at the feet, gently squeeze the muscles in the feet by tightening them, then slowly releasing. You can also point the toes up and then back down for a gentle release.

Next, squeeze the large muscles in the calves for 5 seconds, then gently release. Working your way up the body, squeeze the thigh muscles for 5 seconds then gently release. Notice how much **calmer** you feel already.

Next tense and release the hips and buttocks. You can also do this by straightening the legs and then releasing the tension. Squeeze the abdomen and chest next and gently release. Notice the wave of relaxation moving through you.

Now slowly draw both hands into fists and squeeze tightly for about 5 seconds then release. Point your arms and hands out straight while squeezing tightly then releasing next.

Finally, shift your attention to your neck and shoulders. Raise your shoulders up towards your ears and squeeze for 5 seconds then release. Do this a couple more times and feel the gentle release.

Gently move your head from side to side 2-3 times and then relax. If you would like to, you can continue this activity back down the body for more relaxation.

This activity grounds you into the physical body and it's a great way to practice mindfulness. The tensing and relaxing of the muscles of the body helps **release the strain and stress** of the day helping your child get a wonderful night's rest.

# TENSE AND RELEASE

## MUSCLE RELAXATION

1. Starting at the feet, gently squeeze the muscles in the feet by tightening them, then slowly releasing.
2. Next, squeeze the large muscles in the calves for 5 seconds, then gently release. Working your way up the body, squeeze the thigh muscles for 5 seconds then gently release.
3. Continue moving up the body for more relaxation.

