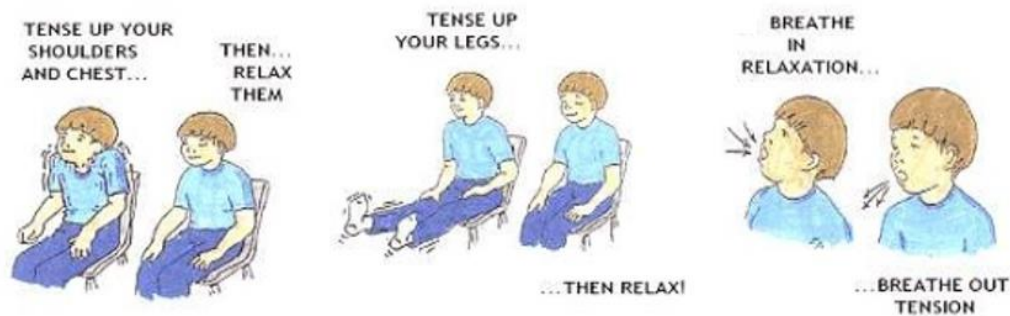


# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation involves deliberately tensing then relaxing various muscle groups for the purpose of becoming more aware of the contrast between tension and relaxation. This exercise will help you to lower your overall tension and stress levels, and help you relax when you are feeling anxious. It will also help **improve your sleep**.

Do this just before you go to sleep!



Between the tensing of each muscle, you will also take a deep breath, hold it, and let it go. Over time, this technique will allow you to create relaxation quickly and at will. Through practice, you will gain a greater sensitivity and awareness of your body's tension, which will allow you to maintain relaxation more easily.

## HOW TO DO IT:

### Step 1: Tense the muscles in your body.

This step is essentially the same regardless of which muscle group you are targeting. First, focus on the target muscle group. Next, take a slow, deep breath and squeeze the muscles as hard as you can for about **5 seconds**. It is easy to accidentally tense other surrounding muscles, so try to **ONLY** tense the muscles you are targeting. Isolating muscle groups gets easier with practice.

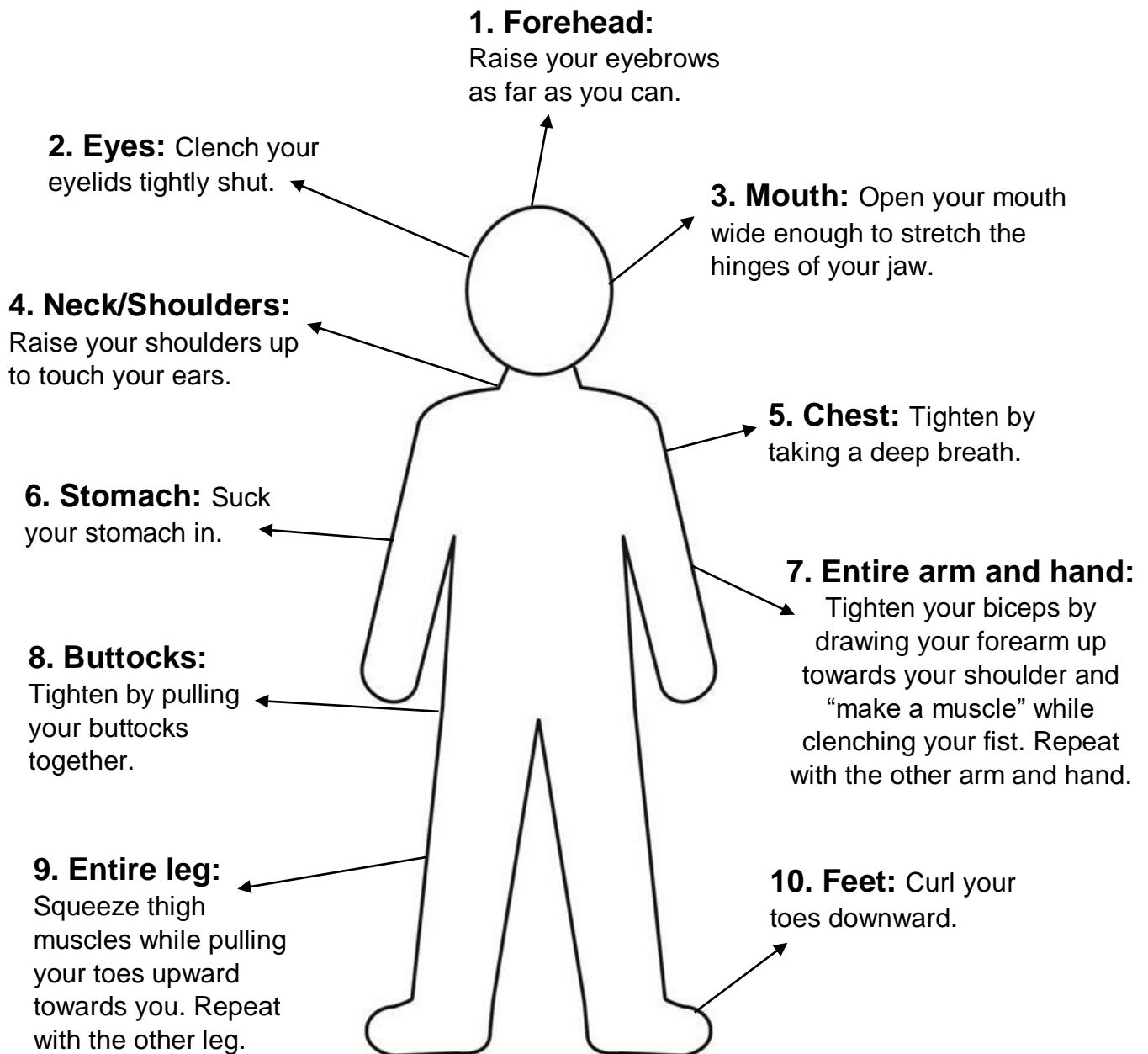
**BUT Be Careful! Take care not to hurt yourself while tensing your muscles. You should never feel intense or shooting pain while completing this exercise.** Make the muscle tension deliberate, yet gentle. If you have problems with pulled muscles, broken bones, or any medical issues that would hinder physical activity, consult your doctor first.

### Step 2: Release tension; notice how your muscles feel when you relax them.

After about 5 seconds, let all the tightness flow out of the tensed muscles. Exhale as you do this step. You should feel the muscles become loose and limp, as the tension flows out. It is important to very deliberately focus on and notice the difference between the tension and relaxation. This is the most important part of the whole exercise.

Remain in this relaxed state for about **15 seconds**, and then move on to the next muscle group. Repeat the tension-relaxation steps.

## Instructions For Each Muscle



### Remember:

<b>Step 1.</b>	<b>HOLD EACH MUSCLE TENSION FOR</b>	<b>Step 2.</b>	<b>PAUSE FOR AND BREATHE IN DEEPLY BETWEEN EACH MUSCLE TENSION.</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Seconds</b>	<b>15</b>	
		<b>Seconds</b>	