Progressive neuro-muscular relaxation

This relaxation technique is also known as ‘squeeze and release relaxation’ because we move through the body contracting and relaxing each part in turn. It is an ideal beginners technique because we may be so familiar with our ordinary state of tension we are unaware we have tension within the body so by first contracting the body then consciously relaxing it we can perceive the difference!

We will work from the feet moving upwards through the body, initially we will hold each part of the body, tensing it, then letting it drop to the floor. Once we have worked through the body in this way we will then visualize the body, little by little, mentally repeating a simple phrase instructing the body to relax.

* Begin by finding a comfortable lying position, using savasana or a suitable modified version.
* Now lift your right foot about an inch from the floor and hold it there, tense the leg, holding it….and releasing it, let it drop.
* Lift your left foot about an inch from the floor and hold it there, tense the leg, holding it….and releasing it, let it drop.
* Clenching both buttocks tightly together, lift the hips a little way off the floor, hold them….and releasing them, let them drop.
* Tense and lift your back and your chest, whilst keeping the hips and head to the floor, hold it….and release it, let it drop.
* Lift your right hand about an inch from the floor and hold it there, making a tight fist, tense the arm, hold it…and releasing it, let it drop.
* Lift your left hand about an inch from the floor and hold it there, making a tight fist, tense the arm, hold it…and releasing it, let it drop.
* Lift both shoulders from the floor, hunching them tight to the neck, hold it…. and releasing, let them drop.
* Squeeze the face tightly, hold it…and releasing it… stretch the face very wide, eyes open, tongue stuck out, hold it….and releasing it, let it go.
* Let the head gently roll from side to side…..releasing to the centre.
* Now visualizing your feet in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my feet…..I relax my feet……my feet are relaxed”
* Now visualizing your calves in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my calves…..I relax my calves……my calves are relaxed”
* Now visualizing your thighs in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my thighs…..I relax my thighs……my thighs are relaxed”
* Now visualizing your hips in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my hips…..I relax my hips……my hips are relaxed”
* Now visualizing your buttocks in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my buttocks…..I relax my buttocks……my buttocks are relaxed”
* Now visualizing your abdomen in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my abdomen …..I relax my abdomen ……my abdomen is relaxed”
* Now visualizing your back in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my back …..I relax my back ……my back is relaxed”
* Now visualizing your chest in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my chest …..I relax my chest……my chest is relaxed”
* Now visualizing your hands in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my hands …..I relax my hands ……my hands are relaxed”
* Now visualizing your forearms in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my forearms …..I relax my forearms……my forearms arerelaxed”
* Now visualizing your upper arms in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my upper arms …..I relax my upper arms ……my upper arms arerelaxed”
* Now visualizing your shoulders in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my shoulders …..I relax my shoulders ……my shoulders arerelaxed”
* Now visualizing your neck in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my neck …..I relax my neck ……my neck is relaxed”
* Now visualizing your face in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my face …..I relax my face ……my face is relaxed”
* Now visualizing your scalp in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my scalp …..I relax my scalp……my scalp is relaxed”
* Now finally, visualizing your whole body in your mind’s eye mentally repeat to yourself “I relax my whole body …..I relax my whole body……my whole body is relaxed”
* Simply allow your body and mind to rest, releasing now more completely…………
* When you are ready to leave the relaxation begin to slowly move the hands and feet, gradually waking the body. Take a good stretch if necessary or perhaps draw knees in and roll from side to side. Roll on to the right side spending a moment here then come up to seated position.