



Physical Self-Regulation (PSR)

Physical Self-Regulation activities are designed to rest and relax your body, and in turn, to reduce pain and dysfunction. Like any new activity, PSR skills take a little time to learn - be patient with yourself as you learn and refine the techniques. But remember, only **YOU** can do the exercises. **YOUR** compliance with doing the PSR activities is extremely important in making **YOU** feel better.

1. PUT YOURSELF IN POSITIONS OF REST: CHECK CLENCHING AND GRINDING

- a.) You are learning the rest position for your mandible (lower jaw).
- b.) Practice lips relaxed (usually apart), tongue relaxed and teeth slightly apart for 1 minute 6 times a day.
- c.) Do not stick your tongue between your teeth - that may cause muscle fatigue or muscle pain.
- d.) Your teeth should only touch when eating or swallowing, only about 3 minutes/day.

2. PRACTICE SLOW, DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

- a.) You are learning a way to breathe that relaxes muscles and restores normal blood chemistry.
- b.) Breathe slowly and regularly using your diaphragm. As you inhale, your stomach should move up and out. When you exhale, your stomach should move down and in. Exhale in a relaxed manner.
- c.) Slow down your breathing by counting to 3 as you inhale. Count to 6 as you exhale and pause for a moment before inhaling again. The pause helps carbon dioxide build up in your brain and blood. If carbon dioxide levels are too low, you will not feel well.
- d.) If at any time you start to feel dizzy or light headed, you are taking in too much air. Either return to your normal breathing pattern, or better, pause longer between breaths and do not breathe as deeply.
- e.) Slow, regular breathing should be very relaxing, but it may take time to learn.

3. MONITOR HEAD POSITION TO AVOID TILTING (COMBINES 1 AND 2)

- a.) You are learning a neutral head position that reduces muscle fatigue and learning to coordinate the use of your neck muscles. You are also learning how to keep your head centered and upright on even, relaxed shoulders.
- b.) Find a comfortable seat (do not cross your legs) relax your shoulders (slightly sloped but even). Keep your head straight up and place your hands in an open position on your thighs. If it feels comfortable, close your eyes.
- c.) While keeping lips relaxed, tongue relaxed and teeth slightly apart, slowly exhale (relaxing your diaphragm) and bend your head straight forward (without causing any pain).
- d.) Pause, and then inhale (using your diaphragm) and slowly bring your head upright. Pause for a second then exhale and bend your head forward again.
- e.) Repeat steps c.) and d.) at a rate of 6 times a minute.

4. EASE UPPER BACK TIGHTNESS AND STRAIGHTEN ROUNDED SHOULDERS

- a.) You are learning a neutral shoulder position and improving the blood supply to the muscles.
- b.) Raise your hands as if conducting a choir. Move your arms backwards and forward without causing pain.
- c.) Repeat the motion 6 times in 20-30 seconds. Do this exercise 6 times a day.

5. TAKE BRIEF RELAXATION BREAKS

- a.) You are learning to take time to relax your mind and your body.
- b.) Start with a 5 minute break gradually increasing the time by 1 minute until you are resting for 20 to 25 minutes at a time.
- c.) Take at least 2 breaks a day

6. BEGIN SLEEP IN A RELAXED POSITION

- a.) Lay on your back and practice breathing for 5 minutes while keeping lips relaxed and teeth slightly apart.
- b.) Say aloud 6 times, "I will not clench my teeth" while picturing yourself sleeping with your mouth relaxed.
- c.) Start off sleeping on your back. Don't worry if you move.

You may combine exercises - for example, combine 1, 3 and 4.... or.... 1, 2 and 4. Practice exercise combinations for 2 and 1/2 minutes 6 times a day. Practice slow diaphragmatic breathing with relaxation breaks anytime you desire.

Remember - be patient,
PSR exercises take time to reverse unhealthy habits.

AVOID ANY ACTIVITY THAT INCREASES PAIN