

## **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)**

1. Slowly breathe in and tense your whole body or any group of muscles that you wish to relax (e.g., your shoulders, face, or abdomen).
2. Hold that tension for about 5 seconds
3. Exhale and release the tension
4. Repeat steps 1-3 several times for each muscle group

*Variations of this skill (for all ages):*

1. “Lemon squeezers” – Pretend you are squeezing lemons to make lemonade. Squeeze your hands to get all the juice out of the lemons and then let go. Repeat.
2. “Touch your shoulders to your ears” – Shrug your shoulders as if you are trying to touch your shoulders to your ears. Hold for 5 seconds. Release. Repeat.

## Coping Skills for Tough Times

3. “Make a funny face”- Squeeze the muscles of your face to make a funny face. Hold for 5 seconds. Release. Repeat.

**When to use this skill:** You can use PMR whenever you feel tension in your body.

**How this skill helps:** Our muscles are like rubber bands. By creating a little more tension in our muscles, holding then releasing that tension, our muscles can go back to a relaxed state, just like when you stop stretching out a rubber band, it goes back to its regular shape.

**If you want to learn more coping strategies, talk to your doctor about meeting with the Psychology Team.**