

CLENCH & RELEASE (MODIFIED PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION)

Have you ever been so angry or stressed you just want to make fists and hit something? In this exercise, you'll be able to make those fists...and then practice mindfully letting go!

- Make fists.
- Feel your fingernails make contact with your skin if possible.
- Whenever it feels too uncomfortable for you to keep holding on, know that you can slowly, mindfully let go at any time.

Notice your fingers uncurling, and feel the trickle of letting go all through your arms, up to your shoulders

Simply observe the sensation of letting go.

Modifications and Applications:

Any muscle group can be clenched and released, especially if clenching the fists is too painful or not possible due to context or physical limitations. Clenching and releasing the stomach and feet are other popular choices.

You can clench and release bilaterally (e.g., first time on right side, next time on left side); this is also a great way to introduce bilateral stimulation as a concept.

Add a relaxing sound (e.g., nature sound, music) in the background, or use an aromatherapy diffuser if you are using this exercise for sleep.

For help with sleep and deeper relaxation, clench and release one muscle group at a time (holding each clench 20-30 seconds and then slowly releasing). The entire exercise should take about 20 minutes.

