

Progressive Muscle Relaxation for Children

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Children with ADHD routinely have difficulties in falling asleep due to the feeling of restlessness. There are a couple of techniques that I have tried with my son but “Relaxing his Muscles”, as he has coined the phrase, is by far his favorite technique and has proven to be most successful in his vie for sleep.

Developmentally, children will learn self-regulation at different stages, however, some children may never master that skill. By supporting the child and helping them to create an awareness of their body and teach them techniques to muscle tension, they will be better equip to practice self-relaxation autonomously. The technique used below has proven effective in relaxation and ability to fall asleep for my child, hopefully, you will find this useful with your own.

1. Explain to the child that you are going to help them relax their muscles and this will help them to relax their body and fall asleep a little easier
2. Find an area in your home that is relaxing and quiet. This is best done when the child has completed all nightly activities and is ready for bed.
3. If you have nature sounds, classical music or something relaxing to play for this child in the background this is most helpful. Play the sounds very low and quiet
4. Turn the lights low and ask the child to lay down and get comfortable. The child can also be standing but will likely relax a bit easier if laying down. Tell the child to think of a quiet, comfortable place – nighttime sky, stars, beach etc..
5. Have the child close their eyes in a relaxing way (not squeezing their eyes shut)
6. Start at the top of the child’s head or temples and tell the child in a soft, low voice ‘rest your head’ apply light pressure with both of your hands to the child’s temples
7. Lightly touch the child’s eyes and say “rest your eyes”
8. Lightly touch the child’s ears and say “rest your ears”
9. Lightly touch the child’s nose and say “rest your nose”

10. Lightly touch the child's mouth and say "rest your mouth"
11. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's shoulders and say "rest your shoulders"
12. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's elbows and say "rest your elbows"
13. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's wrists and say "rest your wrists"
14. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's hands and say "rest your hands"
15. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's fingers and say "rest your fingers"
16. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's fingertips and say "rest your fingertips"
17. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's chest and say "rest your chest" (adjust for females)
18. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's waist and say "rest your waist"
19. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's thighs and say "rest your thighs"
20. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's knees and say "rest your knees"
21. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's shins and say "rest your shins"
22. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's ankles and say "rest your ankles"
23. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's toes and say "rest your toes"
24. Apply light pressure with both hands to child's toenails and say "rest your toenails"
25. Rub the bottom of the feet while applying pressure say "rest your whole body from head to toe. While you are saying that slowly and gently touch child's eyes and bring your hands lightly down each side of the child's body from head to toe to release the last bit of energy from their body.