



### **Tense and Release Exercise**

This exercise is useful for reducing your level of stress and/or anxiety when you are in a stressful situation.

During this exercise you will be focusing on one muscle of your body at the time (for example, your hands, your shoulders, your legs or your upper body). The aim is to squeeze and contract the chosen muscle for 10 seconds and then completely release the tension of the muscles.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> step: Tense**

Focus on your hands, take a deep breath, squeeze the muscles of your hands and feel the pressure for about 10 seconds. The main important thing to remember is to feel the tension in the muscles.

Note: when you tense your muscles, do take care to not hurt yourself. The muscle tension is gentle and not forced.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> step: Release**

After you tense the muscles of your hands, relax these. Exhale while you are letting all the tightness flow out. Breath out when you start to feel your muscles loose.

You can carry on with other muscles of your body.

The most important thing to remember is to focus on the difference between the tension and relaxation of your muscles.