



## **Muscle Relaxation Exercises**

Relaxation is very important in obtaining good breathing control. Once you learn to recognize the feeling of muscular tightness, you will find it easy to appreciate the contrast of muscular relaxation. Remember to:

- practice daily
- perform these exercises in a quiet, comfortably warm room
- avoid pain
- perform all exercises slowly and smoothly
- breathe naturally throughout all exercises

### **SHOULDER SHRUGGING**

Sit in a chair and let your arms hang loosely by your side. Shrug your shoulders and tighten the muscles as much as possible. Hold the position until the muscles of the neck and shoulders feel tight. Hold for a count of five. Release the tension and let the shoulders drop. Repeat three times.

### **HEAD CIRCLES**

Sitting in a chair, let your arms hang loosely, with shoulders relaxed and drooped. Roll your head slowly and loosely from side to side. Reverse direction of the head circle. Repeat three times to each side.

### **SHOULDER ROLLING**

Sitting in a chair with arms resting at your sides, roll a shoulder slowly, clockwise, then counterclockwise. Repeat three times for each side and then three times rolling both shoulders together clockwise, then counterclockwise.

### **ARM AND FIST TIGHTENING**

Lying on your back, or sitting on a chair, with arms resting at your sides, clinch the right fist tightly and bend the elbow. Hold for a count of five. Release the fist and contraction of the arm, and allow the arm to straighten slowly. Repeat three times with each arm.

### **ARMS OVERHEAD WITH CHEST TIGHTENING**

Lying on your back with arms resting at both sides, slowly raise extended arms overhead until palms of your hands meet. Slowly press palms together until you feel a contraction of your chest muscles. Hold for a count of five. Gradually release the pressure at the hands and return arms to your side. Repeat three times.