



## MUSCLE RELAXATION EXERCISES

**In addition to the other steps of preparation for your brain map or neurofeedback session, it is important to also preform these activities to ensure you are ready and relaxed.**

### **Relaxation by Massaging the Scalp**

Use all fingers to gently rake upwards from about the ear to crown with fingertips. Place fanned fingertips with pinky finger starting at the temple and index finger placed on the bone just behind the ear and with the other digits place between. Use the thumbs to apply pressure on the back of the head starting at where the head meets the back of the neck. Then, gently apply pressure and rake fingers up towards the top of the head then back down again. Repeat the raking motion 2 minutes, releasing fingers from hair as needed to prevent matting.





This next exercise is a necessity for individuals who work out, play sports, grind their jaw, rest their jaw in their hands for extended periods of time, and who may have a 'kink' or hold stress in their neck. This exercise works on the jaw, neck and shoulders and is some of the most common reasons we either must redo a map, take a longer map, or have an inaccurate session/map. EEG picks up on tension and can cause us to get an inaccurate reading, while there are ways to artificially remove tension after the map, it is not going to be as accurate. Please, if you feel as if you have any type of tension in these areas do this exercise at least twice before each before your session or map, repeat more frequently if you are experience more extreme symptoms (pain, tightness, etc.). **Everyone should at least massage the jaw, neck, and shoulders, even if you do not feel pain or feel that it is necessary.**

**Jaw:** Begin by massaging both sides of the jaw, where the lower jaw meets the skull. If you grind your teeth, rest your head in your hand, or carry tension in your jaw, massage deeply and in wide circles for 2 minutes. You may also let your jaw hang open with your tongue pressed against the roof of your mouth. You can also open your mouth slightly and move your lower jaw around. If you are still feeling tension in your jaw, preform TMJ exercises you find online.

**Neck:** The most basic activity you can do for tension is massage the areas of your neck that are causing pain, do this frequently, especially leading up to your appointment. If the tension is deeper try rolling your shoulders backwards and down 10 times, squeezing your shoulder blades together 10 times, push you head backwards into you hands or a head rest for 30 seconds, and bring your ear to your shoulder on both sides, holding for 30 seconds on each side.

**Shoulder:** Again, try massaging your shoulders, enough to feel relief but not hard enough to cause pain. For the next exercises make sure you are seated and sitting up straight. Bring your hands to your shoulders and pretend like you are going to grab your shoulders with your thumb facing behind you and your fingers facing in front of you. Have your hands hover as close to your shoulders without touching them and make circles with your elbows going clockwise and counterclockwise for 30-45 seconds each. Next, take a slow, deep breathe as you raise your shoulders into a shrugging position, try and get your shoulders as close to your ears as you can. Once you have taken a deep breath, exhale quickly, forcefully and release your shoulders, repeating for 30-45 seconds. You can also try bringing your ear to your shoulder on both sides, holding for 30 seconds on each side.

**Please repeat these exercises as much as possible before your session. We also recommend you do some basic stretches or yoga to loosen muscles.**



## Relaxation of The Face

Facial tension is another common factor that can negatively impact mapping and neurofeedback sessions. Facial tension can be harder to feel and relieve, below are exercises you should do before your appointment and during.

**Before:** For each of the following exercises, hold the position for 5 seconds, then relax your face, take 3 deep breaths, and repeat 3-5 times. Make a smiley face and clench your jaw closed, raise your eyebrows, make a frowning face, and clench your jaw, and squeeze your eyebrows together making a scowling face. You can also close your eyes tightly for 20 seconds and then relax all muscles and make a 'blank' face, where you are not flexing any muscles in your face for 15 seconds, repeat 3-5 times. Wrinkle your nose and flare your nostrils, holding this position for 15 seconds, then relax, and repeat 3-5 times. Try deep breathing and taking a moment of silence, grounding yourself, repeating as needed.

**During:** Often we hold tension in our faces without even being aware of it. One area of tension that we commonly see is in the eyebrows. To ensure that you are not holding tension in your eyebrows during your map or session, try and relax them. Another area of tension is the cheeks, try and allow your cheeks to relax, this also involves the jaw. If we can see tension in your EEG we may stop and let you massage parts of your face and body to try and relieve it, however often we do not have enough time to properly diminish tension to an appropriate degree so doing these exercises before your session is crucial.