

## c. Relaxing Step by Step

### MODULE 6

The purpose of this routine is to help you learn how to recognize and then release muscle tension. You do this by tightening and releasing your muscles one by one. **Inhale to contract and exhale to relax.**

You may start at your toes and work up to your face or start with your face and work your way down to your toes. Try it both ways and see which one is more relaxing for you.

Find a comfortable position in which all the parts of your body are supported and comfortable.

You may enjoy having your labour partner guide you through your relaxation with a calm and soothing voice. This will help you learn the routine and get you used to relaxing when you hear your labour partner's voice. This will be very reassuring when you are trying to relax during labour.

### Relaxing Step by Step

- Breathe in while tightening your ankles and pulling your toes back toward your body. Breathe out while letting go.
- Breathe in while tightening your legs. Breathe out while letting go.
- Breathe in while tightening your buttocks and pelvic floor muscles. Breathe out while letting go.
- Breathe in while curling your hands into a fist or straightening your fingers. Breathe out while letting go.
- Breathe in while bending your wrists. Breathe out while letting go.
- Breathe in while pulling your shoulder blades together. Breathe out while letting go.
- Breathe in while making a face. Breathe out while letting go.
- Continue breathing slowly and evenly... in and out, in and out, in and out...
- Let your whole body go.... Close your eyes... rest. Breathe in and out, in and out.
- As you sink deeper into relaxation, your body will feel heavy. as if it is sinking into the floor. Let it go. Breathe in and out, in and out.
- Continue breathing: in and out, in and out. in and out. Let the rhythm of your breathing keep your mind clear and calm.
- You may fall asleep. Let yourself go. Breathe in and out, in and out, in and out.
- When you are ready to move, do it slowly and gradually. Clench and stretch your hands. Make circles with your feet and ankles. Move your legs. Sit up slowly. Rest for a moment and then stand up.

If you are alone and wish to exercise, visits the web page for the audio version.

