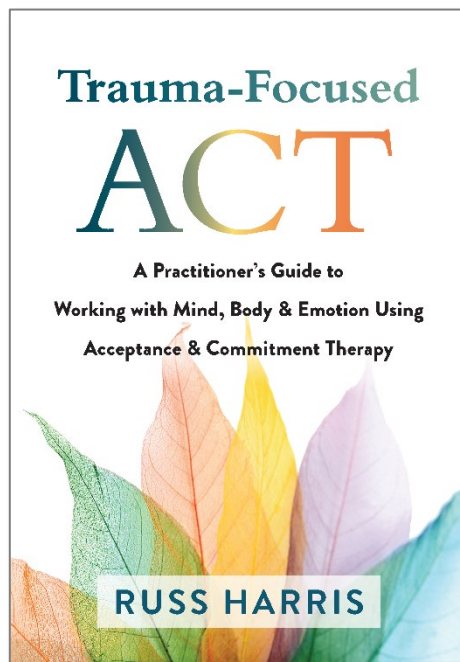


# Progressive Muscle Mindfulness (PMM)

(Bonus material for the textbook, *Trauma-Focused ACT*)



PMM means mindfully scanning your body from head to toe while tensing and contracting your muscles. This is not a relaxation technique. There is *no attempt to relax* (even though this often happens as a side-effect). The aim is purely and simply to notice the sensations in your body, with an attitude of openness and curiosity, while *allowing them to be as they are*.

The aim is to slowly scan your body, fully focusing your attention on the feelings you encounter as you first tense up your muscles, and then ease off the tension. And when you tense your muscles, do so firmly, but gently - never to the point of strain.

Observe each sensation that arises as if you're a curious child who has never encountered anything like this before.

Don't fight with, struggle with, or try to avoid or get rid of the sensations you notice; whether they are pleasant, neutral or unpleasant, observe them with curiosity and allow them to be there.

As you do this, let your mind chatter away like a radio playing in the background (but don't try to ignore it or silence it).

Naturally, from time to time you'll get hooked by your thoughts and lose track of the exercise. The moment you realise this has happened, acknowledge what hooked you, then refocus on your body.

Find a comfortable position, sitting, lying or standing, and either close your eyes or gently fix them on a spot.

Now bring your awareness to your feet. Tense the muscles by curling the toes and the arches of the feet. Keep the tension there and notice the sensations this creates ... on the top of your feet, and underneath them ... and in your toes. *(Pause five seconds)*

And now, see if you can, ever so slowly, ease off that tension ... and notice what happens to the sensations in your feet as you do that ... allowing them to be as they are, without any attempt to change them ... and if they do change, simply noticing the new ones that appear. *(Pause five seconds)*

Now bring your awareness to your lower leg. Tense the muscles in your calves. Keep the tension there and notice the sensations this creates - in your calves and your shins. *(Pause five seconds)*

And now, see if you can, ever so slowly, ease off that tension ... and notice what happens to the sensations in your calves and shins as you do that ... allowing them to be as they are, without any attempt to change them ... and if they do change, simply noticing the new ones that appear. *(Pause five seconds)*

Now bring your awareness to your upper legs and pelvis. Tense the muscles in your thighs. Keep the tension there and notice the sensations this creates - in your upper legs. *(Pause five seconds)*

And now, see if you can, ever so slowly, ease off that tension ... and notice what happens to the sensations in your upper legs as you do that ... allowing them to be as they are, without any attempt to change them ... and if they do change, simply noticing the new ones that appear. *(Pause five seconds)*

Now bring your awareness to your stomach and chest. Tense the muscles by sucking in your stomach. Keep the tension there and notice the sensations this creates in your chest and tummy. *(Pause five seconds)*

And now, see if you can, ever so slowly, ease off that tension ... and notice what happens to the sensations in your stomach and chest as you do that ... allowing them to be as they are, without any attempt to change them ... and if they do change, simply noticing the new ones that appear. *(Pause five seconds)*

Now bring your awareness to your back. Tense the muscles in your back by bringing your shoulders together behind you. Keep the tension there and notice the sensations this creates. *(Pause five seconds)*

And now, see if you can, ever so slowly, ease off that tension ... and notice what happens to the sensations as you do that ... allowing them to be as they are, without any attempt to change them ... and if they do change, simply noticing the new ones that appear. *(Pause five seconds)*

Now bring your awareness to your hands, forearms, and upper arms. Clench your fists and tense the muscles all the way up your arms to your shoulders. Keep the tension there and notice the sensations this creates. *(Pause five seconds)*

And now, see if you can, ever so slowly, ease off that tension ... and notice what happens to the sensations as you do that ... allowing them to be as they are, without any attempt to change them ... and if they do change, simply noticing the new ones that appear. *(Pause five seconds)*

Now bring your awareness to your neck, face and head. Tense your neck and face by screwing up the muscles in your forehead and around your eyes, and clenching your jaws. Keep the tension there and notice the sensations this creates. *(Pause five seconds)*

And now, see if you can, ever so slowly, ease off that tension ... and notice what happens to the sensations as you do that ... allowing them to be as they are, without any attempt to change them ... and if they do change, simply noticing the new ones that appear. *(Pause five seconds)*

Now bring your awareness to your entire body - notice your feet, legs, pelvis, tummy, chest, arms, neck and head. Tense your whole body at once, from head to toe. Keep the tension there and notice the sensations this creates. *(Pause five seconds)*

And now, see if you can, ever so slowly, ease off that tension ... and notice what happens to the sensations as you do that ... allowing them to be as they are, without any attempt to change them ... and if they do change, simply noticing the new ones that appear. *(Pause five seconds)*

And now, ever so slowly, moving, stretching, opening your eyes and ears, noticing where you are, and what you're doing, getting a sense of being in your body and engaging with the world around you.