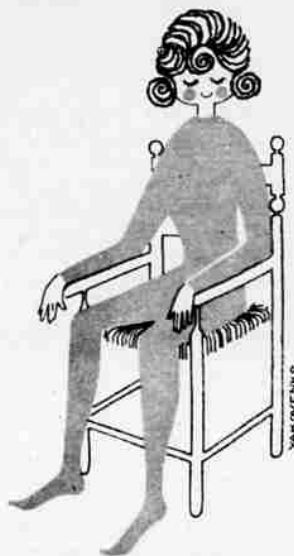


Instructions for Practice Sessions

FIRST WEEK—EVERY DAY: You start each session in the basic position shown here. Rest your feet on the floor about six inches apart, on heels or flat. Rest forearms on the chair arms and drop your head forward. Gradually close your eyes and keep them closed except when you are reading these instructions. If the back of your neck begins to hurt after a time, raise your head a few minutes for relief.

Your assignment each day is to contract certain muscles in order to learn where to look for tensions, then to practice letting them go. This is continued until all major groups of muscles have been included, and you may scan your body mentally for trouble spots.

Practice always starts with five minutes of rest. Think of your body with its many muscular activities as an automobile speeding along at 60 miles per hour. You want to stop the car, but you have no brakes. So you turn off the ignition and coast until the car stops. In the same way, you can turn off your personal ignition by sitting down to relax, but your body also must



BASIC STARTING POSITION

coast to a stop. In most persons, even after training in relaxation, this takes from 15 to 20 minutes. Though you seem to remain tense and restless, you are learning. Many slow learners become expert at relaxing.

You need at least 45 minutes of uninterrupted practice for a relaxing period. Do not watch the clock, but set an alarm or use a kitchen timer. Don't answer the phone or doorbell. Lock other members of your family out of your relaxing room.

These instructions will tell you to relax, to go negative, and to go to zero. They all mean, "Let yourself go." This may be difficult at first, but don't worry. Continue to practice, and you will be rewarded. Learning any skill takes time; very tense people may need as much drill as in learning to type or to swim. Don't be discouraged. Remember that you are studying a hard, condensed course and gaining a lifetime skill. With practice, you discover unsuspected tensions, some of which you may have harbored for years. And you may get rid of them with ease if you don't give up too soon.

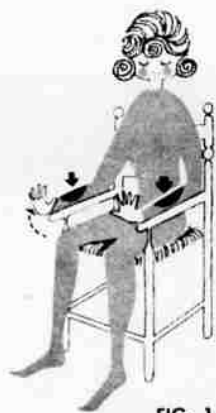


FIG. 1

1st DAY: Place this page of instructions on a chair or table before you. Assume the basic position, closing your eyes except when you must read. In general, you are going to be directed to contract a muscle, to note the tension in the muscle produced by that contraction, to release or relax the muscle, and to note the difference. Then you will be instructed to continue in your wholly relaxed state for several minutes. It's as simple as that.

So assume the basic position now and rest quietly for five minutes, guessing at the time. Today we learn to locate tension in the forearm muscle groups. Bend up both hands (Fig. 1), fingers straight. Hold this position for about 30 seconds. Muscles in your forearms have contracted to bend up your hands. Where do you feel the effort? Where are the tense muscles? Some persons will indicate the wrist but this is discomfort from tendon stretch or strain, not

from effort felt in the muscles themselves. The tension is in the upper, outer, and back part of the forearm where the muscles bulge. Can you feel it?

Now let the hands fall and dangle. Continue to relax for two or three minutes, then repeat the bending up movement of the hand. Hold it still. Feel the tension. Relax! Continue to relax for about 15 to 25 minutes.

Next, turn your arms onto their sides and bend the hands inward (Fig. 2). Note the feeling of tension centered now in the large muscles on the inner surface of both forearms. Relax the tension suddenly and let the hands hang. Did you feel the tension decrease or vanish?

After relaxing two or three minutes, again bend the hands inward, hold, and relax as completely as you can for another 15 to 25 minutes. Total time for both muscle groups: 45 to 60 minutes.

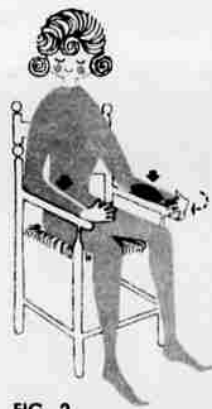


FIG. 2

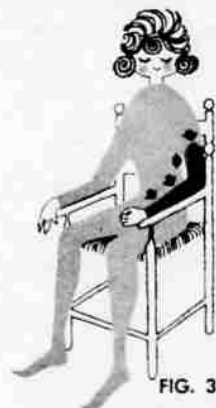


FIG. 3

2nd DAY: Assume the basic position and relax for five minutes. Today we learn to observe tension in the lower and upper arm as a unit. We begin with the left arm. Without moving it, slowly tense the whole arm, curling your fingers into a hard fist. Continue until the arm is rigid as you can make it. Observe tension all through the arm (Fig. 3).

Now, gradually let muscles go limp until no tension is felt. Continue to relax the arm for about 15 to 25 minutes.

Next, repeat the tensions with both arms at the same time, squeezing the fists until all the muscles of your lower and upper arms are rock hard (Fig. 4). Notice the tensions in all contracting muscles of both arms.

Now slowly decrease this tension, gradually relaxing the effort that holds the muscles hard, permitting the entire arm to go negative.

Continue to relax both arms for 20 to 30 minutes. Total time: 45 to 60 minutes.

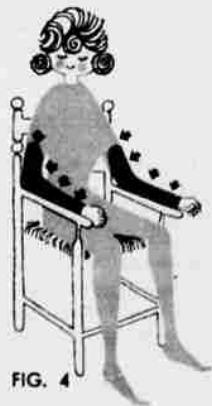


FIG. 4

Turn page for 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th days ▶