

TODAY WE LIVE in a fearful world, and fear is the father of tension. Our senses are prodded by stimulating sights, sounds, and the dilemmas of family, social, and business life.

Our children compete to get into a good college. Husbands compete in jobs and professions. Wives compete with the problems of child-rearing, schooling, and homemaking.

Small wonder that we are reaping a calamitous harvest with half our hospital beds filled with mental patients, and with half of our people seeking medical treatment for ailments brought on, or made worse, by too much worry and anxiety.

But this tension-ridden way of life need not harm us if we take steps to save ourselves. An antidote exists, based on scientific data. By using it, we can stay this onslaught against our nerves. Its name is Progressive Relaxation.

In the past two years, the practice of Progressive Relaxation has zoomed from a respected but little-practiced method of repairing one's emotional or physical state to a lusty movement taught in a dozen U.S. colleges and YMCAs.

And with reason. Not long ago, a famous pianist stumbled into a Chicago doctor's office and slumped into a chair. "Can you help me relax?" he begged, holding up shaking hands. "In two days, I must give an important concert, but I'm too jittery to play. Aren't there drugs for this?"

The physician took the musician into a small room. "I'll give you something better," he said. "I'll show you how to relax yourself, any time, anywhere. And once you've learned, you'll never need help again."

Two days later, the musician played his concert—relaxed and confident, and one critic wrote: "He never performed more brilliantly."

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN lost her husband, saw her child go to a mental hospital, and found herself almost penniless. Her worries brought fatigue and thoughts of suicide. A friend introduced her to Progressive Relaxation. Presently, her spirits returned to normal, she completed a course at a secretarial school and got a full-time job. She was completely rehabilitated.

What is this wonder? Where does it come from? It is a self-operated method which enables a person to relax his tense muscles, thereby turning off impulses which tension-stimulated nerves transmit constantly to the brain. The relief is akin to that obtained when one turns off a bright light that hurts the eye. Its discoverer is a courtly, 74-year-old physician, Dr. Edmund Jacobson of Chicago.

Dr. Jacobson's lonely crusade to teach us to relax began a few years after he became a physician in 1915. He made his first experiments with muscles and nerves at Harvard in 1910, and found that tense muscles transmit messages along their nerve fibers, whereas relaxed muscles

# HOW TO BE REALLY RELAXED

*Beset by anxiety, we have  
forgotten how to rest our  
bodies even in sleep,  
but here is a unique two-week  
program by which you can  
achieve "zero tension"  
and better health*

By **CURTIS MITCHELL**

President of the Association for Control of Tension

transmit nothing whatever. To prove it, he taught himself to relax and fired electric shocks into his own hands. In the relaxed state, true to his reasoning, he could not feel the shock.

He believed that modern man is constantly tense to some degree, whereas, to be healthy, he must have periods of relaxation. To further his research, Dr. Jacobson asked the Bell Telephone Laboratories to help invent an instrument that would determine the amount of electrical current in each human muscle. This project has cost him almost \$1 million to date, but his laboratory is now equipped with neurovoltmeters that can measure current to one-millionth of a volt.

What his first instrument revealed was startling. Each person he tested was a victim of tension. More often than not, even a night of sleep failed to relieve it. Here was waste, a serious leakage of energy. Could this explain why some persons became fatigued without apparent cause

or why arteries harden, ulcers form, or hearts stop? Dr. Jacobson trained himself to relax more and more, measuring his progress toward "zero tension" electrically. To test his methods, he also trained some of his students.

Two unanticipated events years later brought Progressive Relaxation from laboratory to practical application. A wealthy Chicago industrialist, Oscar G. Mayer, suffered two severe heart attacks. Using relaxation as therapy, Dr. Jacobson treated Mayer with such success that he was restored to health and vigor. He became a tireless disciple and a forceful spokesman.

The other event was the renewed interest of physiologist Arthur H. Steinhaus, who had been one of the students trained in the technique 30 years earlier. Now dean of George Williams College in Chicago, he added his prestige to a revolutionary idea.

Why not encourage laymen to teach relaxation to the general public? he asked. Why not use relaxation to prevent the onset of disease? Already, 30,000 teachers of physical education possessed a trained knowledge of physiology and neurology. If they were mobilized in Progressive Relaxation, the benefit would be incalculable.

SO GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE under Dean Steinhaus became the center of a vastly important experiment. Its purpose: to learn whether trained laymen could teach relaxing. Money to start the project was supplied by the Foundation for Scientific Relaxation, a nonprofit organization founded by a grateful Oscar Mayer.

Today, nearly 100 laymen have been certified as teachers by George Williams College. Many of them are turning in astonishing reports.

A teacher at the University of North Carolina scheduled three relaxing classes, wondering if she would have enough students to fill them. Popular demand forced her to add an extra course, which she is giving without credit, yet it has an almost perfect attendance record. From such classes everywhere in the country, reports tell of housewives and businessmen discovering tensions within themselves—and how to cope with them.

This FAMILY WEEKLY self-help course in Progressive Relaxation is a condensation of the George Williams College Course, specially adapted for home use. Proficiency comes only with a good many hours of practice, but practice regularly and you will be richly rewarded.

## Next Week: Differential Relaxation

In addition to completing your two-week course in the fundamentals of relaxation, next week you will learn how to relax while cooking, driving, making a speech, or whatever else you undertake. This method enables you to *reduce* tensions in muscles required for the job you must do and to *eliminate* tension in muscles not needed. Dr. Jacobson calls it Differential Relaxation.