

Morning “Exercise”

These gentle stretches and breathing exercises are wonderful to do each morning to gently wake the body and mind. None of these should feel painful or even difficult. They should feel good.

Try to do these each morning before you begin your day. You may also do them once before bed. These exercises seem simple, but they will help you to reduce stress and muscle tension, thus helping the body to regain its balance and equilibrium. Try to do these at least once a day (if not twice) for a few months and see how they make you feel. At first the effects will be subtle.

Find a comfortable sitting position on the floor, or on a pillow. Cross legged is best if it’s comfortable for you.

Posture: Begin by simply finding your posture. Imagine a string attached to the top of your head, lifting you upwards and elongating the spine. Relax the shoulders. Start by simply following your breath with your mind as it goes in and out of the body. Relax your abdominal muscles and feel the belly expand and contract with each breath.

4,7,8 Breath: Do four of the “4, 7, 8” breaths, exhaling with “Shhhh...”

Head Tilt: Take a nice deep inhale as you feel the breath opening the body from the inside out. As you exhale tilt your right ear towards the right shoulder. Feel the stretch through the shoulder and trapezius muscle. Inhale again while still in the stretch, and then exhale back to center. Repeat on the left, and then on both sides twice more.

Head Circles: Inhale, and on the exhale circle your head down to the right, forward, around to the left, and back to center. Inhale again and repeat the circle to the left. Repeat both sides once more.

Shoulder circles: As you breathe naturally circle your shoulders up, back, down and, forward. Make the circles gentle and continuous. Try to do 10 circles, and then reverse the movement to up, forward, down, and back. Do this ten times as well.

Twist: Then, inhale as you feel your spine elongating upward, and on the exhale gently twist to the right. As you do this you may place the right hand on the floor and the left on the right leg. Feel the gentle twist in the spine as you inhale (while still in the pose) and exhale as you return to center. Repeat this exercise to the left, and then on both sides three more times.

When you've finished these exercises, do another 2 breaths of the 4,7,8 with the "Shhh.." exhale.