

****A routine to ease the symptoms associated with menopause.**

Prepare a comfortable space - soft light, maybe a candle or incense, all will help to calm your nervous system and your mind. Look through the sequence and collect the things you may need so they are to hand during your session.

This is a simple routine designed to gently tone and relax your body, cool your skin and calm your brain. During the routine, keep thoughts to a minimum by drawing your awareness back to your breathing each time it strays. Thoughts will come and go, but you don't need to focus on them. If you find your mind is very restless, start the routine with Savasana, the last pose, and repeat it at the end. If your mind insists on 'making lists' keep a pen and paper beside you and write them down. Then put it all to one side.



Set the timer for 30 minutes and when you're ready, set it to countdown. (Be sure to put it somewhere you can see easily without straining your neck.) Once you're familiar with the routine and its rhythm you won't need the timer, and you can extend the time you spend in the poses as you wish. The focus is on *extension*, not tension.

- **DANDASANA** - sit on the floor with your legs outstretched, feet together, toes pointing up. Put your fingertips on the floor either side of your hips to support your back and allow your chest to lift. Press the backs of your legs down towards the floor. If it feels uncomfortable you can sit with your back to a wall, or try sitting on a block. Allow your breathing to settle and sit quietly for half a minute or so.
- **UPAVISTA KONASANA** - take your legs wide apart. Support the lift of your chest using your fingertips again. Let the weight settle on the centre of each heel, and lengthen your calves, trying to flatten the backs of your legs to the floor. Allow your breathing to settle, and sit quietly for half a minute or so.
- **BADDHAKONASANA** - gently bend each knee and bring the soles of your feet together, knees spread wide to each side. You may find a pillow or cushion under each knee is helpful, and try bricks under your hands to support the lift of your chest. Allow your breathing to settle and sit quietly for half a minute or so.
- **SUPTA BADDHAKONASANA** - place a bolster or cushions with a folded blanket to support your head behind you. Sit on the floor in Baddhakonasana and using a strap or an old tie to secure your feet, roll yourself down over the bolster. Allow your chest to lift and your shoulders to relax, settling the backs of your arms and hands on the floor. Stay for 4 minutes, breathing quietly. Keep your face soft, your jaw relaxed. Allow your lower abdomen and pelvis to gently extend, and your inner thighs to release. To come out, undo your feet and stretch your legs out. Stay for a few moments in this position until you

feel ready to draw your knees up, roll to one side and push yourself up to sitting. Now stand up and clear your mat.

- **PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA** – put a chair near the longer, front edge of your mat. Stand on the back edge of your mat facing the chair with your hands on your hips. Step your legs very wide apart. Place your weight evenly over the balls of your feet, your inner and outer heels. Lift and tighten your kneecaps, and hinging at the hips bring your trunk horizontal to the floor. Bring your forearms and elbows to the seat of the chair, lengthening from your hips to your armpits. Don't let the lift of your legs drop at this point – keep them working to support you. Rest your head on your forearms and stay, breathing quietly, for one minute. To come out, gently release your legs and heel-and-toe your feet together before you come up to standing.
- **ADHOMUKHA SVANASANA** – facing the shorter edge of your mat, put your hands on the floor a good shoulder-width apart and step your feet back. Have your feet a generous hip width apart. Keeping your arms and legs straight, gently press your chest through your arms towards your thighs, and press your thighs away behind you. Keep breathing gently, stretching your armpits, shoulders and spine and lifting your hips. Your heels should be near the floor but don't struggle to get them down or you'll spoil your pose! Hold for 15 seconds then bend your knees to the mat and sit back on your heels to rest your arms and legs. Come up onto your hands and knees, stretch forwards and put your hands near the front end of your mat again. Come off your knees, lift your hips, stretch your arms, and press your thighs back once more. Hold for another 15 seconds, then sit back on your heels once more. Repeat a third time.
- **SAVASANA** – sit in the middle of your mat with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor near the bottom of your mat. Roll your trunk slowly back in a straight line until you are lying flat on the mat, knees still bent. (If you are round-shouldered, you may need a folded blanket to support your head.) Stretch your legs out and let your feet fall apart. (If you suffer from low back pain, you may prefer to keep your knees bent or put a cushion under your knees for support.) Roll your shoulders back and let your arms rest on the floor slightly away from your body. Close your eyes. If you have an eye pad, use it now. Whilst resting in this pose, keep your jaw soft, and your tongue in your lower palate. Don't try and influence your breathing – allow it to settle and deepen in its own time. When the timer signals the end of your session, slowly draw your knees up and roll onto your right hand side. Stay here, resting, until you feel ready to open your eyes and come up to sitting.

