

***A simple routine to release the tension of the day, to de-stress and relax for the evening.**

You'll need a mat for these stretches, or do with your heels close to a wall for support. Prepare your space - soft light, maybe a candle or incense, will help to calm the nervous system. Set the timer for at least 7 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 you won't need the timer.

The focus is on *extension*, not tension, and the downward facing postures help to relieve your mind of the stress and emotion of the day.

- Sit on your heels, keeping your feet and knees close together. (This will stretch the bones of your feet, so if it feels painful, put a folded blanket on your mat.) (20 seconds.)
- Keep your big toes together and take your knees wide apart. Keeping your hips on your heels, walk your hands forward on the mat until your chest meets your thighs, your arms are straight and your forehead finds the floor. (If your hips or head come up, use a couple of blocks to rest your forehead on.) (20 seconds.)
- Pressing down with your hands, lift your hips off your heels and tuck your toes under behind your knees. Push your hips up high, straightening your arms and legs, keeping your neck relaxed and letting your head hang down. (20 seconds.)
- Come back down onto your knees, bring your big toes back together again and sit back down on your heels, forehead on the floor or blocks. (20 seconds.)
- Repeat the sequence of lifting, stretching, and coming down again twice more, keeping the movements slow and deepening the stretch each time. (160 seconds.)
- Come back up to sitting on your heels, feet and knees together. Link your fingers closely and put your hands on your head. Take your elbows slightly back and feel your chest lift. (Tuck your tailbone down towards your heels, and keep checking to see it has stayed down through this sequence.) (10 seconds)
- Raise your arms straight up, allowing the side ribs to slowly stretch and open. Turn your hands over, so your palms face the ceiling. (10 seconds)
- Bring your hands down to your head, with the backs of your hands on your head, and press your elbows back again. (10 seconds)
- Stretch your arms up again. Finally, bring your hands back down onto your knees and allow your arms, neck and shoulders to relax. (10 seconds.)
- Place your right hand outside your left knee and your left hand round the back of your waist. Turn your trunk to the left, breathing steadily, and turning your head last of all. (20 seconds.)

- Come back to the centre and repeat to the right. (20 seconds.)
- Repeat to the left and right once more. (40 seconds.)
- To finish, put your hands on the floor, tuck your toes under and stretching your legs, gently trying to straighten your knees. Then walk towards your hands, bend your knees and roll up to standing. If you enjoy this forward bend, fold your arms and allow your upper body to hang down, keeping your feet parallel and your kneecaps strongly lifting up. Finally, slowly come up to standing.

This sequence starts by helping to relieve your body of accumulated stress, and bring calm and quiet to your brain and nervous system. Your feet, knees and legs are invigorated; your arms, neck and shoulders are stretched. Finally, your chest is opened and your spine energized, leaving your body and mind feeling relaxed and refreshed for the evening.

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