

Unwind From the Day / Practice before Bed

This practice helps you unwind from the stressors of the day, preparing you for a good night's sleep. Strategies include:

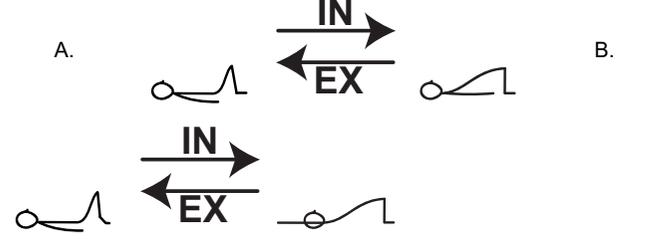
1. Increasing exhale and pause after exhale
2. Forward bends and twists
3. Meditation for sound sleep

Hints:

- Make it a practice of self care, take your time with it. Turn off media and focus on what you are doing. Give it your full attention.
- Pay attention to deepening the breath, especially the exhalation.
- On postures with pause after exhalation, do not pause longer than comfortable; it shouldn't affect the quality of your next inhalation.
- All poses after number 3 can be done on the bed, if preferred.

1		INSTRUCTIONS FOR POSE	RATIONALE FOR POSE; NUMBER OF REPETITIONS/BREATH (Note: BR = breath; IN = inhale; EX = exhale)
2	 or 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit tall, shoulders relaxed. Notice sounds, temp., light. Feel each part of your body head to toe. 2. Observe the thoughts in your mind without engaging in inner dialog. 3. Set an intention to focus on your BR and movements in order to unwind and prepare for sleep. 4. Smooth out your BR, deepening IN and EX to a comfortable max. On IN, expand chest to belly. On EX, contract from pubic bone to navel. 	<p>Rationale: Bring body and mind together.</p> <p>Take 10 slow BR at your comfortable maximum length of IN and EX.</p>
3	<p>A. </p> <p>B. </p>	<p>Place hands on top of chair or counter. Take giant step back with one leg; slightly bend forward knee. Stretch waist to armpits. Lengthen spine; keep head in line between arms. Stand up slowly on IN between sides and at end of pose.</p>	<p>To stretch spine and gently activate adrenal glands to release tension from the day.</p> <p>A. Stay 4 BR, IN=EX; then switch legs and stay 4 BR on other side. B. Stay 4 breaths, IN=EX.</p>

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4		<p>IN: Lift chin slightly and stretch chest away from navel (but do not overarch lower back - keep hips over knees).</p> <p>EX: Shift hips back as you lower chin, forearms, forehead and hips - in that order.</p>	<p>To transition to floor (or bed) and stretch lower back. To lengthen EX, encouraging relaxation response.</p> <p>Repeat 4x: IN = 4 counts; EX = 6-8 cts.</p>
5		<p>Lie on side with both arms extended on floor.</p> <p>IN: Sweep top arm up and over, turning head in same direction.</p> <p>EX: Return to starting position.</p>	<p>Gentle twist to mobilize rib cage, release tension in neck and shoulders. Pause after EX induces relaxation.</p> <p>Repeat 3x, then stay in the pose for 4 BR. During the stay portion, every time you exhale, say mentally: "One deep relaxed breath at a time." Then pause the breath for 1 sec.</p> <p>Repeat on other side.</p>
6		<p>Use cushion under knees to ease any discomfort in back or legs.</p>	<p>Forward bend to stretch back and compensate from previous twist, and to move focus inward. Pause after EX induces relaxation.</p> <p>Repeat 4x: IN = 4 cts; EX = 6-8 cts.</p> <p>Then stay in pose 4 BR. During stay every time you exhale, say mentally: "One deep relaxed breath at a time." Then pause breath for 1 sec.</p>
7		<p>Start with your knees bent, feet approx. 6-8" from buttocks.</p> <p>A. IN: Gradually lift hips up. Keep arms pressing into floor. EX: Gradually roll the hips down. Keep the back of the neck long.</p> <p>B. IN: Gradually lift hips up and stretch arms overhead to floor. EX: Coordinate lowering arms, back and hips so they all land at the same time.</p>	<p>Gentle bridge to ease shoulders/neck and stretch front of hips.</p> <p>A. Repeat 2x - slowly B. Repeat 4x - slowly</p>

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8		<p>Using R hand: Block R nostril with thumb as you IN thru L nostril. Then block L nostril with ring finger as you EX thru R nostril.</p>	<p>Pranayama practice to calm and balance the nervous system.</p> <p>IN through left nostril - 4 cts. EX through right nostril - 6-8 cts.</p> <p>Repeat this pattern for 12 rounds</p>
9		<p>Breathe comfortably. Focus your attention gently on the intention to sleep peacefully tonight. If other thoughts arise, simply allow them to pass as you continue to focus on the peace and calm you've established.</p>	<p>To optimize the calm mindset you've created.</p> <p>2-3 minutes simple meditation.</p>
10		<p>Continue to relax your body with every breath cycle.</p>	<p>Get settled in bed. Every time you exhale say mentally: "One deep relaxed breath at a time." Then pause the breath for 1-2 sec. Continue for 3-5 min</p>