

Quick Bedtime Stretch

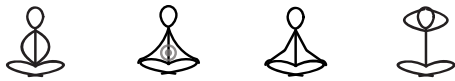
A simple sequence to set you up for a good night's sleep. Go easy with these movements; maybe 80% effort of what you would normally do. eg in DOG posture, keep the knees really bent, keep moving if you like, not pushing up into your 'full posture'. Nice long slow breaths. Unwind your body and feel your mind and emotions unwinding too. Like magic! You'll soon be ready for bed.

1



15 minutes before bedtime, get your pyjamas on, roll out your mat, light a candle and settle onto a cushion and get comfy with a tall spine. As you reflect on your day, bring your hands together into prayer pose or try Padma Mudra (little fingers, thumbs and heels of the hands connect and the other fingers spread out). This mudra opens the heart, stimulates emotional cleansing so that you can let go of the day that's been, and tune into the quality of Gratitude for your day, no matter what has happened!!

2



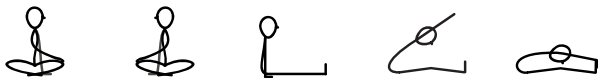
Place your hands onto your belly and bring your awareness to your breath and start to draw it down into the abdomen, to switch on the relaxation response. Try this for about six rounds of nice slow, deep breathing. You can work the neck and shoulders to relieve tension. Place the hands behind the head, breathe in and lift the chin, breathe out and lower the chin and very gently, stretch out the back of the neck X 3.

3



Let's start to gently move the body with some spinal movements, beginning with a SIDE BEND to both sides. Place your right hand on the floor and extend your left arm up, breathing IN and drop over to the right breathing OUT. Repeat at least X 3 times to each side.

4



Now let's do a gentle TWIST. Place the left hand on the right knee and breathe IN, lengthening the spine, turn slowly as you breathe OUT. Stay for X 3 breaths and repeat on the other side. Do as many of these as feels nice. Then extend your legs out and give them a shake. Lift your knees a little bit and come into a relaxed FORWARD BEND. Stay here for X 6 breaths or so.

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5



Then uncurl your spine, and come to lie on your back, knees up, feet hip-width apart. Roll the spine slowly up off the floor a few times, core engaged, not going too high, but working a bit higher each time. You can breathe IN to lift, breathe OUT to lower. You can use your arms as well to move with the breath, overhead as you breathe IN and hold there for a couple of breaths, then lower arms and spine together as you breathe OUT. When you're ready, lift your knees up for a squeeze and the roll over into CHILDS pose and then roll the spine from tail to head for X 3 rounds of CAT & COW pose.

6



Inversions are so good to do before bed, so tuck under your toes for a DOWNWARD DOG, or drop your elbows to the floor if you prefer DOLPHIN, walk on the spot, take your time and stretch out your spine. Hold for a few breaths.

7



Come back to CHILD'S pose when you're ready and then to a sitting position and focus on the BELLY BREATHING once again to slow everything down for sleeping. Turn the palms down on your knees and gently touch the tips of the thumbs and index fingers together for Chin Mudra. 6 X rounds at least, just your normal breath, slowing it down but not increasing the amount of breath as that will wake you back up again!! Hands together. OM SHANTI. Off to bed. Sweet dreams.