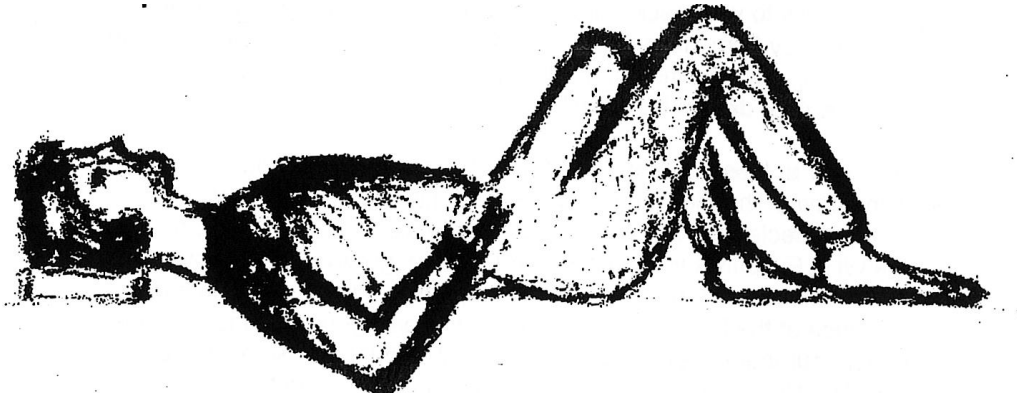


WELLBEING WITH CONSTRUCTIVE REST - THE BEST KEPT SECRET

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Here is the Alexander Technique Exercise (Semi Supine) which works wonders for the back and the neck, and also for stress. It must be the **best kept secret!!!**



Lie down on the floor, on a folded blanket, your **head resting on a couple of paperback** books. Make sure the books are under your head, leaving the neck free.

Then **bend your knees**, so that they point up to the ceiling, while planting your **feet flat on the floor**. The closer you can get the feet to your bum, the better. **Feet and knees about hip wide apart**.

Arms either on your side, palms downwards, or at an angle (elbows pointing to either side, hands somewhere on your belly/lower abdomen).

And then do absolutely nothing. Consciously decide to do nothing. Consciously make the decision to NOT tighten your neck. To NOT clamp your jaw, or your tongue. To NOT hang on to your shoulders. To NOT hang on to your arms. To NOT hang on to your legs. Just allow a very conscious release. Get a sense of the floor below you, and enjoy being completely supported by the floor.

Thinking and NOT doing is one of the most difficult things in this exercise!

Stay awake, eyes open. This is not meditation. Just allow the release of your torso, lengthwise and widthwise, allow the head to drift away from the spine (**think this, do NOT try to do it**). Allow the breathing to happen. Allow the muscles between your ribs to soften. Allow your spine to unravel. Allow your lower back to release - out and away from the centre. **Think this, do not try to do the release. Enjoy not having to do anything.**

Use your imagination to allow the release again and again, to decide again and again not to hang on to your head, your neck, your tongue, your shoulders, your arms, hands, etc.

Keep going back to your neck: allow it to soften, leave it alone. Allow the head to drift away from the spine. Allow space between all the vertebrae, and between the top one and the head. Allow the shoulders to fall away from each other. **THINK this, do not try to DO it.**

Stay there for at least 15 minutes. You will achieve at least some release while lying down. The trick then is to maintain this release, that is to keep making those decisions NOT to contract your neck, back, shoulders, buttock muscles WHILE GOING INTO THE MOVEMENT of getting up. Roll over. Stop. Think release. Get on your knees - stop, think release, and then use the resistance of the floor to push yourself away onto your feet, then use the floor under your feet to get you upright. Just take your time. Stop often and keep deciding NOT to hang on to your head and neck, and to NOT tighten your shoulders.

If you can do this twice a day, you will do wonders for yourself, even when your neck and back are well. You might even grow an inch! **This practice of non-doing is incredibly important**, and in the end, you will be able to do a load of things with as much non-doing as possible (meaning with the least tension necessary). Our conception is distorted: we think we need a lot of muscle push and pull to get things done, when in fact we do not.

When you go about your business during the day and you find yourself getting tense, tired, stressed, give yourself just a few minutes of lying down, a moment of release. You don't need a special place, or even much space, to do this. Just a bit of floor, a couple of books, and a blanket or rug.

The benefits are not just physical. The lying down really helps to take stock, find out where you are at. You are observing your thoughts, without judging. You are observing the muscular tension associated with those thoughts. And you can then decide not to tension, not to contract. Again just THINK that decision, do not try to DO it because in trying to do, you will tension up which is just the opposite of what you want.

Just do the lying down and find out what happens. Be curious and conscious.

With all my encouragement,

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