

Alexander Technique: Constructive Rest

At least once per day take 10 minutes to practice “Constructive Rest.” It will help to restore balance and ease throughout your body and also help you to recognize and prevent interference with that ease throughout the day. Constructive Rest is especially helpful when practiced upon waking up in the morning, before going to bed, and at some point during the day, particularly when you’re busy and stressed.

1. Lie on a firm but comfortable surface (preferably a carpeted floor/yoga mat with a blanket on it for proper support, rather than a bed). You can have your knees up or down, whichever you prefer. Having the knees up tends to relieve pressure on the lower back (this is probably best for you). Place a hardback book beneath your head that is about 1.5 inch in thickness, this allows your head to align with the spine, rather than tilting and dropping back to the floor.

2. Allow yourself to be completely supported by the surface you’re lying on. Once you recline notice any place you seem to be holding tension. Relax and rest into the support of the floor. Just sink and release. It’s important not to *do* anything to make this happen (or any of the directions that follow); this is about *undoing*, or *not doing*. Just simple stop tensing. Do less.

3. Allow yourself to lengthen and widen on the floor. You can help this process by thinking these “directions”—but not trying to *do* them. (It’s like imagining a nice sunny beach, with the water lapping up on the shore and the air fresh and invigorating. You needn’t do anything except imagine that scene and it has an effect on your whole system.)

Say the directions to yourself. (a-e)

a. Let my whole neck be free. Or just neck free.

b. So my whole head can release back and up.

c. So my whole spine can lengthen and widen.

d. Knees forward and away.

e. Heels down

4. As tension releases, you may need to release the curves of your back by gently adjusting your position and rocking your hips gently.

5. When you wish to get up, continue the with the Directions, allowing your spine to lengthen as you roll your head, then shoulders, and the rest of you over onto your side and you use your arms to push you around onto your knees and then you come to standing. There’s no need to tighten yourself up again by pushing or trying to sit directly up. Always look for the path of least resistance.