

The Active Resting Practice

Find yourself lying on the floor with books under your head, knees bent and with your hands resting on your abdomen. You want just enough books so that your head is not tipping backwards or being pushed too far forwards. This is the **semi-supine active resting position**.



Fig 1 Active Resting Practice

This active resting position helps you re-set your body's awareness by quietening down outside stimulus so you can focus on your internal environment in a non grasping or seeking quality. It helps you start to promote an allowing and accepting quality in your thoughts, a key aspect in order for you to be able to **let go** of any **un**-necessary tension. You can also do this in bed if you are in a lot of pain and need lots of warmth and comfort. Turn your attention to your **out** breath and allow all your weight to drop back onto the floor. Continue to follow your out breath and renew the thought of letting go of your weight. Once you get the hang of it you may find your in breath becomes easier and less restrictive as you let go of **un**-necessary tension instead of trying to correct your posture. It is more of an undoing rather than trying.

Quick Guide to The Active Resting Practice

Find yourself in semi supine ensuring you are warm.

Turn your attention to your **out** breath and let all your weight drop back

On the **out** breath think of your neck releasing so your spine can lengthen on the **out** breath

When you find your mind has wondered gently return your thoughts back to letting your weight drop back on the out breath.

Remember to undo rather than try.

What Happens in Practice

Mind wandering! This is natural – treat it like a meditation. When you notice your mind has wandered avoid beating yourself up about it and just return back to noticing your out breath, building it back up again.

Try it with some movement such as turning your head slowly and see if you can still continue to release your neck. Have a go with moving your leg into the straight position or moving your arms to the side. As you practice it more regularly you can begin to do it in activity too such as in the gym, on your bike, running etc where you are in a repetitive rhythm.

FAQ

Q: I quickly lose it and find myself restricting my in breath and shortening my neck again. Why is this?

A: Habits have the nature of wanting to repeat themselves! We just need to get the un-interfered with habit more established before it becomes natural and starts to happen without us thinking about it. Be patient and over time you will be able to let go quicker and for longer.

Q: How long do I have to do it for?

A: Ideally 15 minutes and no more than 20 minutes as you may start to fall asleep. However 2 minutes is better than no minutes. A regular pattern is most effective, just like brushing your teeth, or doing exercise.

Q: Why do it?

A: This semi supine active resting practice helps you self regulate the build up of excessive tension in your body and reset your body's self awareness. For you to begin to notice your habits you need to give yourself a contrast. Through the contrast of reduced stimulus and the Alexander Technique directions (thoughts and/or visualising), you begin to let go of the build up of tension in your body that was **previously out of your awareness**. The floor gives you feed back of your body releasing and you begin to notice your body changing into a more poised, balanced state of being. It also helps you on the way to applying it in activity, reducing un-necessary tension in the moment.

Q: Why do it on the floor?

A: The floor gives you much better feed back than a soft bed, also you associate sleeping with your bed and this is an **active conscious** resting practice. You can use blankets underneath you and on top, to keep you warm you. However if you are unable to practice on the floor the bed is better than not doing it at all.