



A Lux night-time routine

Go on, pamper yourself.

Hey!

I know we are navigating some crazy times right now. Let's just agree that this season of 2020 is a little less than normal and anxiety and stress is almost tangible for all of us! As I was navigating my own anxious feelings, I decided to take some time to quieten my mind, be in the present, take time to thank my body for working and rest in some age old Ayurveda practices (ancient Indian system for healing the body and mind) that allows for an openness to connect with ourselves. I started doing an hour long, okay a little over an hour, night-time ritual that improved my sleep, turned my mind to a more positive incline and soothed my nervous system. It was so beneficial, I wanted to share it with you!

This is just a guide, make it your own. Find your fit and do what feels right to you. Want to skip a step? Go on, be a rebel! This is about YOU and your time.

Here's the breakdown:

The set up

Step one: Simply breathe

Step two: Self Massage

Step three: Soak it in

Step four: Shower

Step five: Sip

Step six: Sleep

Some sweet tunes



The set up

Start by finding some private space. I usually do this in my bedroom that has my bathroom attached to it. If this is not the layout of your home, don't worry! You can start your practice in the privacy of your bathroom. Just make sure you communicate with your household that you need some alone time. I would suggest lighting a candle or two, so you start training your eyes and brain that it is time to wind down, play some soft music (playlist options below) and change into a robe. Get comfortable and settle into the next hour of letting go and self-love. I also make sure to have the following things ready in the room with me:

Coconut or other oil

A book I have been meaning to read

Clean & fresh nightwear

Two towels



Step one: Simply breathe

Duration: 5 minutes

There are mainly two kind of breathing patterns that we adopt on a daily basis:

Thoracic (chest) breathing
Diaphragmatic (belly) breathing

When anxious, stressed or nervous we tend to take shallow breaths. This does not allow for our blood stream to be oxygenated properly and can lead to all sorts of mental and physical distress.

What we want to do in this first step is consciously engage our belly breath. You do this by putting one hand on your belly, and one hand on your chest. As you breathe, take note of which hand rises the most. When breathing well, the hand on your belly should expand and contract with each breath.

So, let's start.

Your candles are lit, soft music is playing, you are in your robe and you have found some private space to safely bring your thoughts and body to.

*Standing up, both feet on the ground, put one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose. Make sure your shoulders are relaxed, and your belly expands as you are inhaling.

*Hold your breath for at least 3 seconds.

*Exhale slowly through your mouth, keeping your jaw relaxed.

Repeat at least 3 times.

Once again, find what feels good for you. If you are more comfortable breathing just through your nose or mouth, do that! Settling into your body and the safety of your space is the key here.



Step two: Self Massage

Duration: 30 minutes

This is a very mindful exercise. Self-Massage originated as an ancient Ayurveda practice. It all starts with SNEHA, a Sanskrit word that translates into both 'OIL' and 'LOVE'. The effects of self-massage are similar to those received when one is saturated with love. During this step, allow yourself to enter a 'no judgment' zone. Try your hardest to have positive thoughts toward your body, and if your mind wanders to places that are unhelpful or hurting, forgive yourself, don't judge and simply make your way back to the beauty that is within you.

Some benefits of self-massage include:

- a feeling of stability and warmth
- an increase in happiness in the body
- a balance of the nervous system
- an increase in circulation
- vigour to the muscles
- lubricated joints
- heightened mental awareness
- improved sleep
- helps in excretion of impurities in the body

It is often known as the antidote to stress, fear and anxiety.

Applying a mindfulness practice to self-massage adds another layer of relaxation and peace.

Research shows that those who practice gratitude along with mindfulness have well balanced blood pressure levels, better metabolism and moods.

I have given you a guide for words you can speak over your body, but ultimately say what feels right to you. Repeat the words for as long as you are massaging that part of your body. You can say the words out loud or in your mind, do what feels comfortable.

*Warm approximately 1/4 cup - 1/2 cup of coconut oil and use as needed, depending on how dry your skin is.

*Start at the top of your head and work slowly outwards in a circular motion to your whole head, massaging the oil into your scalp

{I am thankful for my mind, for all the thoughts it holds and the intelligence I have}

*Move to your face, gentle circular motions- forehead, temple, jaw, cheeks and neck. Make sure to massage your ears and ear lobes. Remember to massage upwards.

{I am thankful for my senses, for what I have seen, smelt, heard, touched and tasted today}

*Move to your shoulders and arms, using long strokes on the long bones and circular strokes on the joints. Remember to massage toward the direction of your heart.

{I am grateful for the strength in my arms and my shoulders. For all that I have carried today, mentally and physically}

*Gently massage your chest, moving toward your heart in circular motions

{I am kind and compassionate, and I am thankful for my strong heart, and every breath it has rewarded me with today}

*Then move to your belly, using broad strokes, clockwise direction.

{My tummy has done the hard work of choosing what nourishes me. I am grateful for that. For how it looks on the outside and how it functions on the inside}

*Then move, as you can to your lower back

{My back is strong and has held me up, I am so grateful for the strength in my spine}

*Massage your upper and lower legs. Remember to use long strokes on the long bones and short, circular strokes on the joints.

{I am thankful my legs have walked through all that this day has been. They have been bold and served me well}

*Finally, finish by sitting and massaging your feet.

{I am grateful for my body, and all that it does, from the top of my head to the soles of my feet}



Step three: Soak it in

Duration: 10 minutes

After your self-massage, lay one of the towels on the ground and have a seat.

Allow the oil to soak in and penetrate the deeper layers of the skin.

During this time, you can read a book, or simply listen to music while you let your mind wander to a place that feels safe and brings you joy. I often allow myself to dream of a day that made me truly happy or focus my eyes on candle light and let my mind wander.



Step four: Shower

Duration: 10 minutes

Enjoy a warm shower (or bath if you feel like drawing out your routine for longer), using a mild soap.

When you get out, pat dry instead of rubbing the oil off your body. Don't use a lot of direct heat on your hair, just gently dry with a towel or light heat.

Change into clean and fresh nightwear and enjoy the feeling of being deeply nourished



Step five: Sip

Duration: 10 minutes

Make a cup of warm herbal tea. Some calming ones include:

Lemon Balm

Chamomile

Peppermint

or my personal favourite, an Indian golden milk made with...

Turmeric and honey

I make my liquid gold one of two ways, either with fresh turmeric and ginger root or ground. Both methods below to make one delicious cup:

1 cup unsweetened almond milk or milk of your choice
1 inch of fresh turmeric root
1/2 inch of fresh ginger root
1 tsp of ghee or coconut oil
a tiny pinch of black pepper (not optional, this little spice helps us absorb all the good stuff in the turmeric)
1tsp (or more to taste) of honey or organic sugar
A cinnamon stick (optional)

OR

1 cup unsweetened almond milk or milk of your choice
3/4 tsp of ground turmeric
1/2 tsp of ground ginger
1 tsp of ghee or coconut oil
a tiny pinch of black pepper (not optional, this little spice helps us absorb all the good stuff in the turmeric)
1tsp (or more to taste) of honey or organic sugar
A cinnamon stick (optional)

For both recipes, put all the ingredients in a pot, watch and stir until it simmers (do not bring to a boil), strain into a cup and enjoy!



Step six: Sleep

After sipping on the tea of your choice, head to bed.

But. Before you do, can I urge you to set an intention for your sleep? An intention is a declaration of desired reality. **It shifts your minds focus to a beautiful thing** before you fall asleep.

Do this by getting into bed, taking 3 deep breaths as you did at the start, focusing on your breath and then voice gratitude first and intention second. I'll give you an example. I usually say something along the lines of...

Gratitude

"I am grateful for this day. I am grateful for my health. I am grateful for the love I have in my life."

Intention

"I will have good dreams tonight, and wake up with energy tomorrow morning"

Make it your own. If you have a faith, you can incorporate prayers or holy words into your practice. Use the words that come naturally to your mind and flow from your heart.



Some sweet tunes

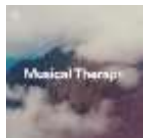
Here are some music suggestions that compliment your lux routine:



Peace: [A Spotify Playlist](#)



Calm Vibes: [A Spotify Playlist](#)



Musical Therapy: [A Spotify Playlist](#)



Inscape: [Alexandra Streliski](#)



Dreamland: [Alexis Ffrench](#)



Fallen Leaves: [Agustin Amigo](#)