Compassionate Care Initiative
at the University of Virginia

Massage & Muscle Relaxation Techniques

Body Alignment

- Lie on the floor with head supported by a book so that skull is aligned with spine
- Place legs at a 45 degree angle by supporting them on a chair or sofa
- Concentrate on points of body touching the floor and parts of the head touching the book
- Your mind will wander off, but each time you notice it wandering bring your focus back to the points of your body touching the floor and book
- When the mind is focused on these contact points gravity will relax the body and allow the skeleton to find it's natural alignment
- To return to standing roll onto your hands and knees
- At this point you may do a few yoga stretches: the child's pose and cat pose and then go into downward dog with knees bent walking your hands into your feet, head down.
- Then with both feet on the floor and head down and remaining heavy roll up through your spine one vertebrae at a time, head coming up last
- Raise your arms over your head and standing tall reach for the sky and gently arch backward.
- Lower your arms and notice how you are standing.
- Feel your body and the space surrounding you
- Feel the relaxation in your muscles even while standing erect.

5 minutes or more lying down is a great way relieve stress, rejuvenate your energy level, and align the body.

Muscular Relaxation

- Using a tennis ball, roll the ball under one foot while standing with your full weight on the other foot (use a support if you need help balancing)
- Stand on both feet and notice how your body feels
- Switch feet and repeat.
- Once again focus on how you are standing and the feeling in your body.

This exercise will not only relax your muscles but train you to have a heightened kinesthetic sense of your body. This is also a great exercise for sore or tired feet!

Pain Relief

- For tight muscles use the tennis ball under the muscle group that is causing discomfort
- While lying on the floor roll on the tennis ball in that area.

For prolonged or severe pain be sure to consult a medical professional.

Information compiled and provided by Licensed Massage Therapist, Betty Mooney.