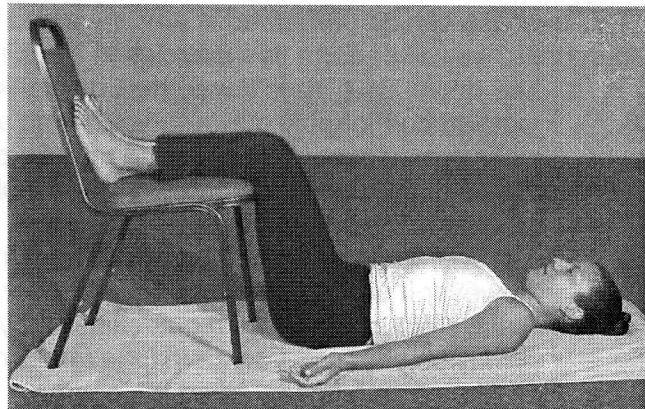


SELF-CARE EXERCISE: POSITIVE REST

Performing the Exercise:

Place the feet over a chair or stool so that they are on an even horizontal plane with the knees slightly elevated. Rest head and gently tuck the chin to extend the upper portion of the cervical spine. Relax the masticatory muscles and let the tongue rest on the bottom of the mouth. Place both hands comfortably along sides or on the pelvis and initiate slow, expansive breathing with the eyes closed.



Special Instructions or Precautions:

Be sure that the lower back is flat and the chin is tucked; if hands are resting on the pelvis, be sure they are being moved with each wave of respiration.

Frequency:

Practice for 15 minutes daily

Benefit:

The Positive Rest Position allows the lower extremities to drain, provides a traction for the lower back, facilitates breathing, and places the head in a neutral yet supported position. It can increase energy, concentration, and body awareness. It is especially helpful in adding buoyancy to the intervertebral discs, releasing the psoas muscle, and allowing for spinal elongation. The Positive Rest Position provides a nearly pain-free point of reference that is an important step toward postural awareness, self-induced relaxation response, and development of self-supporting postural reflexes such as pelvic control, chin tuck, and three-dimensional breathing.

SELF-CARE EXERCISE: DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

Performing the exercise:

1. Lie down on a rug, towel, mat or blanket on the floor in a "dead body" pose - your legs straight and slightly apart, your toes pointed comfortably outward, your arms at your sides and not touching your body, your palms up, and your eyes closed. This exercise may be performed in a positive rest position as well.
2. Put one hand on your abdomen below your navel, and place your other hand on your chest, right at the center.
3. Without trying to change anything, simply notice how you are breathing. Which hand rises the most as you inhale—the hand on your chest or the hand on your belly?
4. If your abdomen expands, then you are breathing from your abdomen or diaphragm. If your belly doesn't move or moves less than your chest, then you are breathing from your chest.
5. Breathe through your nose in a nice slow steady rhythm. It should take nearly as long to exhale as it does to inhale.
6. Is your chest moving in harmony with your abdomen, or is it rigid? Spend a minute or two letting your chest follow the movement of your abdomen.
7. Return to breathing normally. Notice how you feel. Is it any different from how you felt at the beginning?

