

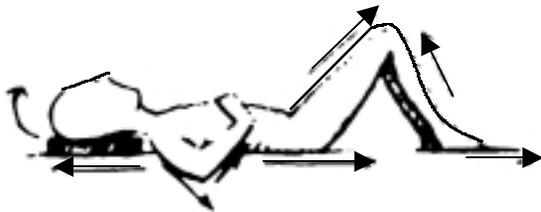
Alexander Technique: Constructive Rest

At least once or twice a day, take 2-5 minutes (but no more than 20 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 when 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 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. By placing books beneath your head, allow 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. Notice any place you seem to be held off that support and allow it to 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*, allowing the activity and tensing that are already happening to stop.



3. Notice the directions indicated on the drawing above. Allow yourself to lengthen and widen along those lines. 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 to imagine that, yet it has an effect on your whole system.)

- a. My whole neck to be free,
- b. so my whole head can release back and up,
- c. so my whole spine can lengthen and widen.

4. As tension releases, you may need fewer books beneath your head, or you may need to release the curves of your back by gently adjusting your position.

5. When you wish to get up, continue the “directions” and allowing your spine to lengthen as you roll your head, then shoulders, and the rest of you over onto your side and around onto your knees and then 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.