



## *Sleep Support Protocol*

### *Evening Ritual*

1. Set consistent bedtime
2. Digital sunset i.e. stop using any screens 1-2 hours before bed
3. Self-care practices:
  - Warm bath with magnesium salts
  - Gentle stretching or yoga
  - Journaling
  - Light reading from a physical book (not from a screen)
  - Gentle skincare routine

### *Morning Ritual*

1. Set consistent wake time
2. Morning light exposure (15 minutes)
3. Light movement/stretching
4. Protein-rich breakfast or Protein shake within 1.5 hours of waking

### *Sleep Support Strategies*

#### **If trouble falling asleep:**

- Progressive muscle relaxation (see next page for how to)
- 4-7-8 breathing (see page 3 for how to)
- Focus on gratitude
  - Name 3 things you were grateful for during the day and focus on how each of those thoughts make you feel.
- Keep a pad and pen next to your bed – If you have ideas or plans that come to mind write them down so you have them to look at in the morning.
- Avoid clock-watching

#### **If waking during night:**

- Keep lights dim
- Use bathroom if needed
- Brief breathing exercise
- Return to bed when sleepy

# *Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)*

## *For Peaceful Rest*

PMR is a gentle yet powerful relaxation technique that helps calm both mind and body by systematically releasing physical tension. This practice is particularly supportive during nighttime wakings, offering a mindful alternative to OCD patterns while nurturing your nervous system.

The beauty of PMR lies in its ability to:

- 🌿 Create a physical pathway to mental calm
- 🌿 Provide a focused, soothing nighttime ritual
- 🌿 Support natural sleep hormone production
- 🌿 Offer a gentle anchor when intrusive thoughts arise

### **Basic PMR Routine (15 minutes):**

- Lay in your bed
- Close your eyes and take three deep breaths
- For each muscle group:
  - Tense muscles firmly (5 seconds)
  - Notice the tension
  - Release completely (10 seconds)
  - Notice the relaxation

### **Muscle Group Sequence:**

- Hands - make fists
- Forearms - flex wrists
- Upper arms - bicep curl
- Shoulders - shrug
- Face - scrunch
- Neck - gentle head tilt
- Chest - deep breath
- Stomach - tighten
- Thighs - squeeze
- Calves - point toes
- Feet - curl toes

# 4-7-8 Breathing

## *Your Natural Sleep Support*

This calming breath pattern works like a lullaby for your nervous system, helping to create the perfect conditions for restful sleep. It's particularly nurturing when your mind feels active at bedtime or during night-time wakings.

### 4-7-8 Breathing Routine

- Find a comfortable position and relax your shoulders
- Breathe in quietly through your nose for 4 counts
- Hold your breath gently for 7 counts
- Make a whooshing sound as you exhale through your mouth for 8 counts

Repeat this cycle 4 times

***Tip: Place one hand on your belly to feel it rise and fall with each breath***

### Why it works for sleep:

- 🌿 The extended exhale naturally triggers your relaxation response
- 🌿 The gentle rhythm helps quiet a busy mind
- 🌿 The counting provides a soothing focus
- 🌿 The pattern helps shift you from 'doing' mode to 'resting' mode

Think of it as a beautiful bridge between wakefulness and sleep - each breath cycle helping your body remember its natural wisdom for rest. When practicing at bedtime:

- Let your breath be soft and gentle
- Allow your body to feel heavy and supported
- If your mind wanders, simply return to counting
- Remember there's no 'perfect' way to practice

💡 ***Tip: The magic lies not in forcing sleep, but in creating conditions where sleep can naturally arise.***