

The Evening Wind-Down Flow

A 10-Minute Seated Practice to Release the Day and Prepare for Sleep

Companion to Morning Chair Tai Chi for Seniors Over 60

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Why Evening Matters

If your morning practice opens your body and wakes your joints, your evening practice does the opposite. It releases the tension you have collected through the day. It softens your shoulders. It quiets your mind. And most importantly, it helps you sleep better.

Sleep difficulties are one of the most common complaints among adults over 60. Joints ache more at night. The body holds tension from a long day of sitting, standing, or worrying. The mind keeps running through tomorrow's plans long after the body wants to rest.

This Evening Wind-Down Flow is designed for exactly that. It uses five gentle seated movements drawn from your main program, arranged in a specific

sequence that signals to your body that the day is ending. By the time you finish, your muscles are softer, your breathing is slower, and your nervous system has shifted into rest mode.

This is not a workout. It is a transition. A bridge between the activity of your day and the quiet of your night. Ten minutes is all it takes.

When to Practise

Do the Evening Wind-Down Flow about 30 to 60 minutes before bed. Not right before sleep -- your body needs a little time to settle after the practice. Not too early in the evening either, since the calming effect works best when it is closer to your actual bedtime.

Practise in a softly lit space if you can. Bright overhead lights work against the relaxation effect. A bedside lamp, a candle, or simply natural fading evening light is ideal.

Sit in the same chair you use for your morning routine. The familiarity helps your body settle into the practice faster.

Tip: *Wear loose, comfortable clothes that you will sleep in or change into right after. Tight clothing pulls you out of the relaxation state you are working to enter.*

The Evening Wind-Down Flow

Five gentle poses. Ten minutes. From your chair. Nothing more.

Pose 1 Three Long Belly Breaths — 2 minutes

1 SIT TALL



2 HANDS ON BELLY



3 EYES CLOSED



4 INHALE
4 COUNTS



5 EXHALE
6 COUNTS



6 REPEAT
8 TIMES



Sit on the front half of your chair. Sit up tall but soft. Place both hands gently on your belly. Close your eyes. Breathe in slowly through your nose for four counts. Feel your belly push outward into your hands. Breathe out slowly for six counts. Feel your belly draw gently inward. Repeat eight times. With

each exhale, allow your shoulders to drop slightly. Let the day settle into your hands and out through your breath. There is nowhere to be right now except here.

Why this helps at night: *Long, slow exhales activate the parasympathetic nervous system, your body's rest and digest state. This is the biological signal your body needs to begin transitioning from day to night.*

Pose 2 Slow Shoulder Roll and Release — 1.5 minutes

1 EYES OPEN

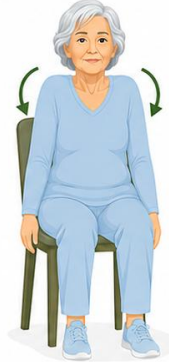


2 ROLL BACK



5 TIMES

3 ROLL FORWARD



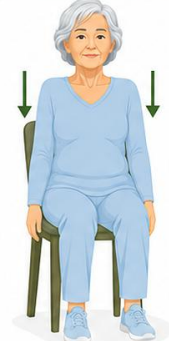
5 TIMES

4 SHOULDERS UP



HOLD 1 BREATH

5 DROP DOWN



LONG EXHALE

6 REPEAT



DROP 3 TIMES



Open your eyes softly. Let your arms hang loosely at your sides. Roll both shoulders slowly backward five times. Up, back, down, forward. Make the circles as wide as feels comfortable. Reverse direction. Roll forward five times. Then lift both shoulders up toward your ears. Hold for one breath. Drop them suddenly with a long exhale. Repeat the drop three times. With each drop, release something else from the day -- a worry, a frustration, a small irritation.

Why this helps at night: *Your shoulders collect tension all day from sitting, standing, and carrying mental weight. The drop motion is a physical signal of letting go. After three drops, the muscles around your neck and shoulders are noticeably softer.*

Pose 3 Cloud Hands at Twilight — 2 minutes

1 SIT TALL



2 HOLD SOFT BALL



3 TURN RIGHT
RIGHT HAND UP



4 TURN LEFT
LEFT HAND UP



5 FLOW SLOWLY
CONTINUOUS



6 BREATHE NATURALLY



Sit up tall. Hold both hands in front of your chest, gently rounded, as if cradling a soft ball. Slowly move your right hand upward toward shoulder height while your left hand lowers to your lap. Let your body rotate gently to the right. Without stopping, reverse. Left hand rises, right hand lowers. Body rotates left. Keep the movement continuous and slower than your morning version. Every motion should feel like a sigh. Continue for two minutes. Breathe naturally throughout.

Why this helps at night: *The slow rotation gently massages the spine and abdominal organs. The continuous quality of the movement is deeply*

calming for the nervous system. This pose is your main release for the upper body in the evening.

Pose 4 Seated Side Stretch and Release — 1.5 minutes

1 SIT TALL



2 RIGHT HAND SUPPORT



3 LEFT ARM OVER



4 HOLD
3 BREATHS



5 SWITCH SIDES



6 REPEAT
2 ROUNDS EACH SIDE



Sit up tall. Place your right hand on your right knee for support. Breathe in. Raise your left arm slowly up and gently over toward the right side of your body. Feel a soft stretch along your left ribs. Hold for three slow breaths. Do not push. Breathe out. Lower your left arm slowly. Repeat on the other side. Left hand on left knee. Right arm rises and reaches gently left. Do two rounds on each side. Move slowly and gently.

Why this helps at night: *The sides of your body store tension from sitting and from emotional stress. Even a gentle side stretch releases that*

accumulated tightness and improves the depth of your breathing as you prepare for sleep.

Pose 5 The Settling Breath — 2 minutes

1 PALMS UP



2 EYES CLOSED



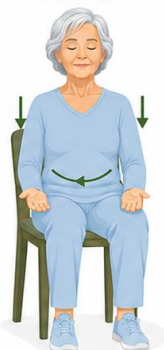
3 BREATHE NATURALLY



4 INHALE
SAY "IN"



5 EXHALE
SAY "OUT"



6 OPEN EYES
PRACTICE COMPLETE



Place both hands palm-up on your thighs. Close your eyes. Breathe naturally. Do not control the breath. Just notice it. With each inhale, silently say to yourself the word "in." With each exhale, silently say the word "out." Continue for two minutes. If your mind wanders to tomorrow or to today's worries, simply return to the word and the breath. There is nothing else to do. When the time is complete, breathe in deeply once. Breathe out slowly. Open your eyes softly. Your practice is complete.

Why this helps at night: *Naming the breath silently anchors the mind in the present moment. This is the most powerful technique for stopping the mental chatter that keeps seniors awake at night. Two minutes of this practice is more effective than many sleep aids.*

After Your Wind-Down

When you finish, sit quietly for one more breath. Do not jump up immediately. Let the calm settle in for a moment longer.

Then move gently into the rest of your evening. Brush your teeth slowly. Change into your nightclothes calmly. Avoid bright screens for the next 30 minutes if you can. The work you just did continues to soften you for sleep, but bright phone and television screens can undo some of it quickly.

Climb into bed feeling lighter, looser, and quieter than you did before you sat down. This is what evening movement is supposed to do.

How This Pairs With Your Morning Practice

Your morning practice opens you up. Your evening practice settles you down. Together they create a complete daily rhythm that supports your joints, your nervous system, and your sleep.

You do not need to do this every single evening for it to work. Even three or four evenings a week makes a measurable difference in how well you sleep

and how you feel the next morning. Start with whatever feels achievable and build from there.

On nights when you are particularly tired or do not feel like doing the full sequence, do just Pose 1 and Pose 5. Two minutes of breathing and two minutes of the settling breath is enough to signal your body that the day is ending. Some evenings is better than no evenings.

Quick Reference Card

Tear or cut this section out and keep it on your bedside table for the evenings you need it.

The Evening Wind-Down Flow

Pose 1: Three Long Belly Breaths (2 min) *Hands on belly. Breathe in 4 counts, out 6 counts. Eight breaths. Shoulders drop with each exhale.*

Pose 2: Slow Shoulder Roll and Release (1.5 min) *5 backward rolls. 5 forward rolls. Lift shoulders, drop with a long exhale. Three drops.*

Pose 3: Cloud Hands at Twilight (2 min) *Hands move in continuous slow horizontal arcs. Body rotates gently. Slower than morning.*

Pose 4: Seated Side Stretch and Release (1.5 min) *One hand on knee, opposite arm reaches up and over. Hold three breaths. Two rounds each side.*

Pose 5: The Settling Breath (2 min) *Hands palm-up on thighs. Eyes closed. Silently say "in" on inhale, "out" on exhale. Two minutes.*

Total: 10 minutes | Practise 30 to 60 minutes before bed

Mornings to wake you up. Evenings to wind you down. A complete day of gentle movement, one breath at a time.