
EXHALE

A T H O M E

The Art of Stillness.

An invitation to be still, exhale, and be cherished.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

An invitation, not an assignment.

You don't need a spa. You don't need a special occasion. You need alone time, a few things from your kitchen, and permission to stop.

Everything in this little guide is simple on purpose. Yogurt and honey. A sock full of rice. A cucumber from the fridge. The focus isn't in the ingredients. It's in the slowing down, and in what you let yourself hear when the noise finally dies down.

There is no wrong way to do this. If you fall asleep during the face mask, that was the plan all along.

YOUR ONLY JOB

Be present. The space is prepared, so you don't need to be doing anything. Let one thing flow into the next and let the rest wait.

THE FLOW

SET THE STAGE	Settle in. Light the candle, start the music, put your phone in another room.
SOLE REPOSE	The foot soak, something to nibble, something to sip.
HAND + FACE	Mask on, gloves on, ten quiet minutes.
BOTANICAL SERENITY	A warm, scented towel. Aroma, warmth, quiet.
AHHHH MOMENT	Warm neck wrap. Cool eyes. Slow breathing.
THE GENTLE WHISPER	A warm cup of tea and a short devotion for the soul.

GATHER

Nothing fancy. Most of it is already in your home.

SOLE REPOSE

- Epsom salts
- One lemon or flower petals
- A basin or the tub
- Warm water
- Towel
- Cozy socks
- Foot Lotion (optional)

FACE

- Plain yogurt
- Honey
- Small bowl and spoon
- Washcloth and hand towel
- Chilled cucumber water in a spray bottle
- Face Moisturizer
- Disposable gloves or sandwich bags

HANDS

- Hand cream
- Disposable gloves (or sandwich bags)
- Small towel

AHHHH MOMENT

- One clean cotton sock
- Uncooked rice
- A cucumber
- A soft headband

BOTANICAL SERENITY

- A washcloth
- Lavender or eucalyptus (oil, tea bag, or fresh sprigs)
- A bowl of hot water
- A blanket (optional)

NOURISH BODY + SOUL

- Fruit, cut veggies, nuts
- Infused water
- Herbal tea and a pretty mug
- Your Bible, a pen, a candle

Organize everything beforehand so you can relax.

SET THE SPACE

The room is part of the ritual.

THE ROOM

- Choose one quiet, uncluttered corner. Clear what you can. Close the door.
- Lower the lights. Light a candle or use a lamp with a soft bulb.
- Add a scent: eucalyptus in a vase, a simmer pot of cinnamon and orange slices, a favorite candle.
- Play soft piano, barely there. Quiet enough to hear yourself breathe.
- If the weather is kind, open a window, or take one part of this outside.
- Put your phone in another room.

YOUR PLACE

Set a tray or a cutting board with everything you'll need, just like a place setting at a table: the face mask in a small bowl, your gloves, a towel and washcloth, the rice sock, the headband, cozy socks, and a small glass of herbs or a eucalyptus stem.

Write your name on a little card and set it there. Yes, even though you're the only guest. You're worth being expected.

THE SOAK

Set the basin on a towel where you can sit comfortably, with a kettle of extra-hot water nearby.

A FEW GENTLE CAUTIONS

- **Honey and yogurt mask:** try a dab on your inner arm first. Skip it if you have a dairy or honey allergy or sensitive skin.
- **Foot soak:** keep the water comfortably warm, never hot. If you have diabetes, medical concerns, or are pregnant, check with your doctor first.
- **Rice sock:** use 100% cotton, with nothing metal. Heat in short bursts, shake it, and test on your inner wrist. Never microwave it unattended.
- **Warm towel:** test on your inner wrist before it touches your face. Damp, never dripping. Keep the nose uncovered.
- **Essential oils:** always dilute in water, never on dry fabric or directly on skin. Check with your doctor if pregnant and keep away from pets.

SOLE REPOSE

Something to nibble. Something to sip.

Soak your worries away.

- I Fill a basin or the tub with comfortably warm water, ankle-deep or a little higher.
- II Stir in **½ cup Epsom salts** and the juice of **half a lemon**. Drop in the lemon halves, and a sprig of eucalyptus or rosemary if you have one. Or use flower petals or fresh flowers.
- III Fix a small plate and pour something to sip before you sit. Then you won't have to move.
- IV Slip your feet in and soak **15 to 20 minutes**. Eat, sip, or simply be still.
- V Pat your feet dry. Hydrate them with a little lotion, if you wish, and slip on your cozy socks. Keep them on for the rest of your spa time.

Soak first. Next hydrate.

H A N D + F A C E

Hydrate your body as you quiet your mind.

THE FACE MASK

Stir together **2 tablespoons plain yogurt** and **1 teaspoon honey** in a small bowl. That's the whole recipe.

THE HAND TREATMENT

Smooth a generous layer of hand cream or a little oil over your hands and slip on disposable gloves. Sandwich bags work in a pinch. Wrap your hands with a towel.

CUCUMBER MIST

Fill a small spray bottle with water and add a few cucumber sticks (cut to fit the bottle). Refrigerate for 30 minutes. Use within a couple of days.

THE RITUAL

- I Begin with a face wash, if needed. Pat dry.
- II Smooth the mask over your face, avoiding your eyes. Then slip on the hand treatment.
- III Rest for **ten quiet minutes**. Recline, close your eyes, and let your shoulders drop.
- IV When you're ready, remove the towel, then the gloves, and massage the remaining moisture into your hands. Blot any excess with your towel.
- V Rinse off your mask with a warm washcloth.
- VI Finish with a cooling cucumber mist and your favorite moisturizer.

Hydration complete. Next serenity.

BOTANICAL SERENITY

Aroma + Warmth + Quiet.

A warm, scented towel is one of the oldest and simplest luxuries there is. You can make one in under two minutes.

THE AROMATHERAPY TOWEL

- I Fill a bowl with hot water. Add **2 to 3 drops** of lavender or eucalyptus oil. No oil? Steep a lavender tea bag or a few rosemary sprigs in it instead. Never put oil on dry fabric.
- II Soak a clean cotton washcloth, then wring it until it is damp and not dripping.
- III Roll it tightly and microwave **30 to 45 seconds**. Shake it out to release the steam.
- IV **Test on your inner wrist.** It should feel like a warm hug, never a sting.
- V Lie back and lay the towel over your face, nose uncovered. Press lightly. Don't rub.
- VI Stay for **ten quiet minutes**. Remove your towel, and if you wish, pull a blanket over you and enjoy a few more minutes of serenity.

If you have a heating pad or massage pad, use it on low, and never for more than 30 minutes without a break. Or throw your blanket in the dryer and wrap yourself in the warmth.

From serenity to AHHHHH.

A H H H H M O M E N T

Let everything else wait.

THE RICE SOCK NECK WRAP

- I Fill a clean cotton sock about two-thirds full with uncooked rice. Tie it off tightly with a knot, or stitch it closed.
- II Microwave for **1 minute**. Check it, shake it, and add 15 to 30 seconds if you need to. Test on your inner wrist.
- III Drape it across your neck and shoulders. Let the warmth do the work.

THE CUCUMBER EYE MASK

- I Chill two thick cucumber slices in the fridge until you're ready.
- II Pull a soft headband down low over your eyes and slide a slice under the band on each side. Or just lay them over your eyes.

THEN

Settle into a quiet nook. Close your eyes. Breathe in for a count of four and out for a count of six. Do that for a few minutes and let the room go silent.

AHHHH to Gentle Whispers.

THE TABLE

Simple, fresh, and within reach.

TO NIBBLE

- Fruit: grapes, berries, sliced pear or apple
- Cut veggies: cucumber, carrot, snap peas, radishes
- Nuts: almonds, pistachios, or walnuts
- One savory bite: a little cheese, olives, or hummus
- One simple sweet: a square of dark chocolate or a date

TO SIP

- Infused still water: cucumber and mint, lemon and rosemary, strawberry and basil
- Sparkling water with a twist of citrus
- Herbal tea: chamomile, peppermint, or lavender

TO SET THE TABLE

Use a real plate and a real glass. Choose a warm mug and a cloth napkin. Eating from something pretty, even alone, is how you tell yourself you matter.

THE GENTLE WHISPER

*A warm cup of tea.
A spa for the soul.
And an exhale for the body.*

Pour your tea. Wrap both hands around the cup. Leave the music soft and the ending unrushed.

Choose one reading. Read the passage slowly (out loud, if you can), and then let my few words sit beside it. Take a breath. Sit in the quiet for a full minute before you say anything else. This is the part where the soul catches up with the body.

I BE STILL

Psalm 46:10 (AMP) - "Be still and know (recognize, understand) that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations! I will be exalted in the earth."

We hear "be still" and think it's a pretty suggestion. It's really an invitation to take your hands off the wheel. You are not holding the world together. You never were. Let that be good news, and let God be God while you sip your tea.

Breathe. *In: I'm not in charge. Out: And I'm held.*

Sit with. What am I gripping tightest right now?

II COME TO ME

Matthew 11:28–30 (MSG) - "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Jesus doesn't say, "Try harder." He says, if you're worn out, come, and I'll show you a lighter way to live. Notice He offers rest first, before the to-do list, before you've earned anything. What if rest were your starting place, and not your reward?

Breathe. *In: I'm tired. Out: I'm coming.*

Sit with. Where am I carrying something He never asked me to carry?

III HE RESTORES

Psalm 23: 1-3a (ESV) - The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Look at who's doing the work in this psalm. The shepherd makes the sheep lie down. The shepherd leads. The shepherd restores. The sheep just follow and rest. Some of us have to be told to lie down. Consider this your permission.

Breathe. *In: You lead. Out: I rest.*

Sit with. Where in my life am I asking to be restored?

IV THE GENTLE WHISPER

1 Kings 19:9-13 (ESV) - There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Elijah was exhausted and running on empty. There was a wind, an earthquake, a fire, and God wasn't in any of them. He showed up in a gentle whisper. Our days are loud, and God is rarely shouting. Sometimes it takes tea, a warm sock of rice, and a quiet room before we can hear Him at all.

Breathe. *In: Speak softly. Out: I'm listening.*

Sit with. What has been whispering to me that I've been too busy to hear?

V A QUIET SOUL

Psalm 131 (ESV) - O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.

David describes a soul that is calm and quiet, like a child resting against her mother who isn't demanding answers or explanations. He stopped trying to figure out what's too big for God. There's so much freedom in that. You don't have to understand it all today.

Breathe. *In: I don't need to know. Out: I need You.*

Sit with. What question can I set down for today?

VI COME AWAY

Mark 6:31 (ESV) And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

Even Jesus' closest friends were so busy they didn't have time to eat. His answer wasn't a lecture on productivity. It was, "*Come away by yourselves.*"

Breathe. *In: I'm here. Out: I'm yours.*

Sit with. Who or what do I need to step away from so I can exhale?

ONE LAST MINUTE

Close your eyes.

Breathe in slowly.

As you breathe out, whisper: "Lord, I'm here."

Then say nothing at all.

That is enough.

CHERISHED TO KEEP

Let it linger.

Give yourself the same gift you'd give a guest to take home. When the tea is gone, and the music fades, close your time gently.

YOUR TO-GO GIFT TO YOURSELF

- Keep a journal and pen close. After the *Whisper*, write one honest sentence.
- Write yourself a note: "*A little stillness to go.*" Tuck it somewhere you'll find it tomorrow.
- Smooth on a lip treatment before bed.
- Wear something soft to bed. Let your hair down, literally.
- Put on a stillness playlist: soft piano, cello, or the sound of rain as you drift off to sleep.

MORE GENTLE TOUCHES TO HELP YOU EXHALE

- Keep the herbs or eucalyptus in a small vase by your bed.
- Leave a "*Do Not Disturb*" sign on your door. Even a sticky note will do when you just need a few minutes alone.
- Go barefoot or in cozy socks all day. Better yet, stay in your pajamas for a whole day.
- End the night with no screens. Let the quiet follow you to bed.

SHARE IT

Invite a friend, a sister, or your mother to do this alongside you. Stillness is a gift that multiplies when it's shared.

E X H A L E