

## FLOOR MASSAGE (& Cat Stretch)

Begin laying on the floor – starting on the back; make sure the whole body is completely relaxed (a yogic “Shavasana” pose, with the legs straight and slightly separated, arms loosely by the sides, is a good way to start.) Breathe deeply, thinking of breathing down into the pelvis. Become conscious of where the body is in contact with the floor and visualize the weight of the body “melting” into the earth through those contact points. (It is also nice to visualize the floor as a soft substance - a warm, sandy beach or a feather mattress, for example.) Spend enough time in this initial position to induce a release of tension from the body, allowing it's full weight to “sink” into the floor.

From here, keep this sense of the body's weight sinking into an imagined soft surface and begin to shift gradually onto your side, finding a comfortable position in which to relax there.

Again, become conscious of the main weight-bearing areas of the body in this position and allow the body's weight to release into the earth through these points.

Now shift through the back and onto the other side – make the transition slow and smooth, keeping the whole body's weight in close connection with the earth.

Finally shift onto the front and establish the same weight connection with the floor in a comfortable position there (shift the head from one side to the other if needed for symmetry.)

Next, begin to move slowly and continuously – shifting and rolling from one position to another. Feel as though you are “melting” (I like to use the image of chocolate melting in the sun) or “pouring” yourself, as though liquid.

Stay as connected with the floor as possible, allowing the weight of the body to constantly sink into the pull of gravity.

Feel as though you are massaging your body into the floor.

Once this complete release of the body's weight into the earth in the form of a “Floor Massage” has been established, begin to introduce the idea of stretching out a little further. Visualizing the image of a cat stretching, begin to reach, lengthen, arch and expand the motion into space – while maintaining the initial weight connection with the earth as “home base”. Enjoy playing with tempo, weight and fluidity as you massage and stretch in free-form motion.

#### INTENTIONS:

The primary focus of this exercise is to release the body from tension and promote freedom of motion via an emphasis on the body's weight succumbing to gravity.

The desired movement quality is one of slow fluidity – like a thick liquid being poured. Then a cat-like elongation of the body that presses into a stretch and then melts back into liquid again.

It is a thorough process for working out all the kinks and throughout the exercise there should be a progression into luxuriating in the movement as a sensual experience.