

Letting Go

30-minute playsheet

Welcome to the **Letting Go 30-min sequence** - a practice in, well, letting go! We're all holding onto things that don't serve us; unhealthy thinking patterns, behaviours, attitudes, addictions, ways of relating, old relationships and so on it goes. Yet it's the things that we unconsciously refuse to let go of that create tension in the body, and it's that tension - that contraction of self - that not only leads to an ill, achy body, but fuels a mentally draining and depleting view of ourself.

Let this sequence be your invitation to let go of ALL the gunky stuff that no longer serves you so that you may experience the joy, pleasure and vibrant health that is rightfully yours. So you can fall in love with YOU! Please read this playsheet thoroughly and come back and revisit it often, because the content alone will help to reprogram and rewire some of the conditioning that is keeping you from releasing your fears and hurts so that you can indeed, live your love story and live happily right NOW!

BASE POSITION

I'm going to use this lesson to explore **Base Position** in more detail, because the **Base Position**, also known as Semi-Supine or Constructive Rest Pose, is the one place where your body will naturally unfold and let go, without you having to 'do' anything. It's a yummy position, that when practised regularly, helps to release tension in the body so that your body may balance and align itself for natural, easeful movement.

Resting in the **Base Position** revitalises and prepares you for daily activities. This position facilitates release throughout the musculature, but in particular the psoas. It also awakens awareness, and is restful because lying down decreases muscular habitual tension patterns. It really is a useful position for unraveling tension patterns from the core outward, enhancing proprioception and letting go of old conditioning.



On top of that, lying in the **Base Position** nourishes the Vagus Nerve as well as nourishing your adrenals, toning down your 'fight or flight' response and as a result, helps you feel even more centred and more balanced, making it the perfect pose to come to when you feel frazzled, overwhelmed, stressed, or simply need a little dose of self-lovin' goodness.

Give it a go...

Ok so it sounds simple, lie on your back, feet flat on the floor hip-width apart, knees pointing towards the sky, right? Yes, and no. In order to ensure your spine is fully supported to let go, it helps to have a folded towel or book under your head for support (no more than 1 to 1 and half inches) to allow the cervical vertebra to be neutral. The height of the support you choose matters. You want your head support to be the perfect height for YOU!

This height will depend on the distance between the back of your head and the most curved point of your thoracic spine. If you have a large curvature of the thoracic spine you may need the towel folded a couple of times, while people with a smaller curvature, won't need it so high. Take some time to explore what feels right for you, aiming to ensure that your head doesn't fall back behind the spine.

You want your head support to be at the same level as the spine and pelvis. Make sure you place your support under the upper half of your skull, not under the neck and make sure you don't bunch the towel or use a pillow. You want a firm, even support that will create a solid base for your body to unwind in a way that encourages natural alignment. If you're tense in your shoulders, this support is even more important.

This head support creates a link to the whole spine and torso to help you access an opening and expansion that we simply can't experience in our body if our head drops back when we're lying flat on the floor without support. So I really encourage you to take some time outside of your practice, to experiment with the right head height for your support, so you can have that prop available to you when called for in your practice.

Ensure the surface you're lying on is firm, but supportive. A carpeted floor or a thick yoga mat possibly won't be enough to allow your body to fully release and let go. You want maximum padding. Personally, I like to have a large folded blanket on top of my mat for a bit of extra support (a mattress is too squishy), as it feels really yummy and invites me to fully let go every time I lie down. You want to feel like the earth is coming up to support you in this pose.

As you lie in **Base Position** - on your back, feet flat on the floor, knees pointing to the sky - let your feet find the right position. You'll know, because your legs will be equally balanced so that your pelvis is free to move, the hip sockets will have an open, easy feeling, and the weight will be distributed evenly in both feet all the way to the tripods in each foot. Make sure they're not rolling in or out. If your legs are tending to fall inward, bring your feet closer together. If they're falling outward, take them further apart.

Check in that your spine and pelvis are symmetrical. If your body was placed vertical in this position your head would be stacked over your heart, your heart over your pelvis. We want to achieve this while lying down; our head, heart and pelvis as perfectly in line as your body will allow. Let your bones rest along the floor. What do you do with your hands? Up to you. You can rest your hands on your pelvis or by your sides, whatever feels more natural for you and does not create tension.

Don't try to iron out the curve in your lower back - as in, don't try to make your lower back make contact with the floor. Your lower back will naturally do this as your psoas relaxes and your spine unfolds. Let it unfold itself naturally, simply noticing what takes place. The **Base Position** really is a non-doing position. It's a 'being' position, a position of rest and letting go. Simply lying here is extremely constructive because gravity releases extraneous energetic nerve tension out of the psoas.

In the **Base Position** - your body is in the optimum position to work with the freedom of your jaw and tongue and the flexibility of the soft palate when breathing. So as you lay here, invite your jaw and throat and tongue to relax and let go. Then take that invitation to other areas of your body that are tight or holding tension. Don't expect the tension to melt away immediately, simply set the intention for it to. That's all it takes.

Bring your awareness to the sensations in your body. Tuning into the sensations in your body while resting in **Base Position** will enhance your experience of relaxation and help to mature your central nervous system. Every time your mind fills with something you 'think' you should be doing, simply let the thought go without judging it, and bring your awareness back to the sensations in your body. This simple act of

witnessing yourself - habitual feelings, thoughts and perceptions - frees energy to allow your body to return to its natural state of love.

To come out of the pose (unless directed otherwise in one of the sequences) take one hand across your body to the floor on the opposite side. Roll to that side, and gently push yourself up, maintaining space in your body. Be careful not to tense back up, as you move into a sitting or standing position and head back into your day. Keep your awareness on the space you've created during your time on the mat with the intention to move with presence.

In *Yoga for the Vagina* we begin each sequence lying down in **Base Position** (aside from the **Letting Go sequences** where we shake out our tension first) in order to release tension, so that as we move into the poses, we're not creating further tension in the body, but inviting it to let go. When we move into a physical activity tense, we weaken our body immediately, making us far more prone to injury.

I love **Base Position** because it's the ideal position for healing, hence why we return to this position regularly throughout the sequences. It's a safe, neutral position, perfect for coming home to yourself so you can truly 'feel' yourself. Each time you return, it helps broaden, deepen and nourish your awareness. It's a starting point for unravelling all forms of tension in the physical and energetic body.

Base Position can also be used as a baseline to compare sensations before and after exploring your body, and as a reference point for noticing growth and change within yourself. Taking the time to fully engage with this position will promise you a rich experience of yourself. Something I personally look forward to each day.

Holding onto old hurts only hurts the body and psyche.

Don't be surprised if while in this position, emotion or old 'stuff' begins to rise to the surface. Anything that emerges for you while in the **Base Position** is not in response to the position, but is energy stored in the memory of the tissue. When you rest in a neutral position like this, you create a safe space for anything you've been holding onto to rise to the surface to be felt and thus, let go. This is how healing occurs.

The purpose of this pose is to simply let go! Let go of the ego-driven-mind, let go of the negative mind-chatter, let go of the tension that has resulted in the body from stuck emotions and harmful thoughts. If you can't bring yourself to do a full yoga sequence some days, simply lie in **Base Position**; treat it like a mini sequence in itself. Simply allowing that union of self to unfold, is what will give you self-acceptance, confidence, peace and a deep inner knowing that you are all you need.

THE USE OF YOUR BODY

How do you use your body? Take a moment to ponder this question. Feel into it, write a few words

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Most people never really consider *how* they use their body, taking for granted that it does what it does, misusing their body until part of it breaks down and they're forced to look at how that happened.

The **Letting Go sequences** are my invitation to you, to bring awareness to how you use your body. How you perform each action as you move through your day. What muscles you're activating, what feels good, what feels like it's causing tension in the body. This is the kind of awareness that will help you begin to use your body more mindfully so the joints and muscles don't get rusty and eventually start causing you pain.

A clear indication that you're not using your body well is getting sick regularly, suffering injuries, experiencing aches and pains, headaches, feeling stressed and tired, holding tension in places like the shoulders, feeling like you're holding the weight of the world on your shoulders and simply feeling out of balance. If you experience any of these symptoms, even just occasionally, then you could benefit from learning how to use your body more effectively.

In the **Breast Love sequence** we explore ideal womanly posture in detail, but the use of your body is about more than just your posture. Yes, posture is important and you want to feel like there is a string pulling you up from the crown of the head like a puppet, as your feet root down into the earth, but what's even more important, is feeling space in the body. You want to be experiencing a feeling of spaciousness as you move in and out of your daily activities.

When we are not experiencing spaciousness, there is contraction. Contraction leads to tension. Tension stops the energy in the body flowing, making us prone to injury and sickness. As you move through the poses in the *Yoga for the Vagina* sequences you'll start to experience what it feels like to have more space in your body, as I guide you to relax and release in various ways throughout the poses.

As you learn how to sense yourself more completely, you'll free up the inner intelligence of your mind and body to learn new, better ways to use your body that take far less effort - that are more natural. An example of this is drinking from a drink bottle. Many people jar their neck back causing a severe contraction in the neck as they lean back to take a sip. When you're focused on spaciousness in your body you will be drawn to lift your neck up and back, creating more space, to take a drink, as opposed to crumpling the neck and thus shortening it.

It's simple changes like this - on how approach the way you move your body - that make all the difference and can mean the difference between the wear and tear many people experience in their later years. These simple changes I'm talking about begin with you noticing each time you move - to get up from a chair, to hold your foot on the brake in the car - whether the way you're creating that movement is easeful or whether it's creating tension and strain.

Bring awareness to your daily movements...

If you place close attention on how you initiate movement, you may be surprised to find that you probably bring unnecessary effort to the activity: Tensing your pelvic floor, curling your fingers and toes, fixating your eyes, or raising your shoulders. How often do you find yourself tense in the throat or jaw? These are all habitual patterns that we have accumulated over time, constantly creating tension in the body.

Simply start to notice this tension. Where you accumulate it most. How it feels. If there are particular activities you do where the tension is more prominent. There is always a simple way to initiate a movement. As you become more aware of how you are using your body - sensing what it feels like to be tense compared to how it feels to move more spaciously - you will start to free yourself from past conditioning, eliciting fresh, unfettered movements.

Tension, which involves muscular contraction, produces both lactic acid and carbon dioxide in the body - both of which are waste products. By reducing chronic tension, we reduce the quantity of these waste products, as well as the work the body needs to do to counteract them. Practising letting go of tension in the **Base Position** will help you recognise unnecessary and unhealthy muscular work, so that movement muscles are not activated unless they're required for a particular task. Much of the time we're activating a whole host of muscles in the activities we carry out, that really are not necessary.

One place that women especially hold a lot of this tension, is in the neck and shoulders. Well our head does weigh a massive 4.5-5kilos! Next time you're at the veggie shop try picking up a 4-5kilo bag of potatoes and imagine what that would feel like balancing on your neck! If we're using our body as it was designed, we experience an expansive response to support that weight. If badly coordinated the result will lead to compression, and compression creates tension that can trigger an injury.

Moving through the day crumpled over is damaging to both our psyche and our body. Lifting through the spine creates elongation and lightness that creates the spaciousness I was talking about before, that allows for optimal functioning of the body. We all have underlying patterns of use. Our body doesn't need to learn how to stand, breathe or move, we simply need to strip off the conditioning that has interfered with our innate abilities to use ourself in a way that is effortless and promotes a healthy alignment, healthy cellular structure and healthy mental space.

Just as pulling on one pearl of a pearl necklace affects all of the other pearls, so too does a dysfunctional joint that is compressed, unstable, or stressed, disrupt the whole skeletal system. The entire body follows the direction of the head - so if your head is light and lifted - your body will naturally follow into a healthy alignment. The more you explore *Yoga for the Vagina*, the more you will notice how lifting and lengthening through the spine - encouraging the crown to draw towards the sky - is a common concept, and this is part of the reason why.

One of the common ways women in particular mis-use their body is by constantly contracting the abdomen (sucking in their belly). This interferes with breathing, digestion and overall coordination. Any excess bracing like this hinders the effectiveness of the activities we do as it creates tension and unnatural movement. Injury only happens when we misuse our body, when we don't listen to what our body is telling us. Our body is a communication tool and to ignore those messages is to open ourself up to harm.

We'll explore the role tension plays in our body in far more detail once you arrive at the Layer 2 learnings and explore the **Letting Go 60-min playsheet**, but for now, simply start to become more aware of how you use your body and where you're holding tension. Practise what you learn on the mat, off the mat, as this is where the real integration happens.

A FEW WORDS ON BEING BENDY...

Just because we're doing yoga, doesn't mean you need to be able to stretch your body into shapes that look like they belong at the circus! Everyone is flexible in their own way. A way that is perfect for them right now. For example some people can do forward bends much more easily than backbends, while for others it's the opposite way around. For this reason, don't strive for the perfect looking posture. Just because you think it looks good, doesn't mean it's healing for your particular body shape.

In *Yoga for the Vagina* correct alignment and ease is ALWAYS more important than how far you can go into the pose (how flexible you are). The benefits derived from any particular pose, come from you feeling a stretch, and breathing into that stretch, using the breath as a way to create a deeper inner

connection to your body. For this reason, I encourage you to listen to what your body can do in any given moment; where it can stretch without causing tension or pain.

Self-awareness is key. Keep checking in to see how you feel emotionally as much as physically in each pose. Start to bring your awareness to those feelings, as your emotional health is in direct alignment with your physical health and vice versa. For example, chronic fear engages the psoas in a negative way that compromises pelvic stability. This is what is meant by the mind body connection.

Inflexibility in the body is a product of inflexibility of the mind.

We hold tension in the body and the tension is what stops us being able to touch our feet or stretch beyond our current limitations! You want to develop a quality and ease of movement that does not create unnecessary tension - as opposed to pushing yourself into poses that simply don't work for your body shape and flexibility in that area.

Some people will be hyper-mobile, some will be tight - there is no right. Work with where you're at right now - bring presence to your practice with the only objective being to 'feel' yourself, connect with yourself. If you're hyper-mobile bring your focus to connecting with yourself, as opposed to excessive stretching. You may be putting extreme stress on your joints without realising it. Over extension can be really dangerous.

That is why there are 'Other Ways' for each pose in this series, so you can match your body to the way that best works for your level of bendiness (not a preconceived idea of how the pose 'should' appear). Suit the pose to your body, not the other way around! Your body has an inner intelligence. It knows what it can and can't do in any given moment, and if you listen to it - be still with your body - then your body will communicate this to you.

OK! I'M READY TO START...

So the first thing you need to let go of when you start your **Letting Go 30-min guided audio** is any goals, objections, needs or aims. *Yoga for the Vagina* is a non-goal orientated practice. I know, I know. Maybe you came to this practice to cure incontinence or have full body orgasms. Whatever drew you to this practise, take a deep breath in, and on the exhale, let it go. Letting go of any expectations or attachments is what will create the space for the healing you most need. Sometimes healing a problem you didn't even realise you had, until it's no longer there.

Go into your practice with a beginner's mind. No matter how many times you've practised, be open to experiencing something new. Let the practice be what it needs to be for you in that moment. Surrender into your body. Let yourself become aware of the union between your mind and body, or the lack thereof. All awareness is healing. Let go of any need for healing to look or feel a certain way, knowing that if you're on your mat doing your practice, healing is happening.

If you feel restless or fearful during any poses, know that it's not the position itself that is creating the sense of danger. The feeling of fear may actually be old conditioning surfacing as the tissue begins to release. Whatever you feel in your practice, don't abandon yourself. Getting in touch with sensations, feelings, and thoughts while being present helps to evolve the nerve pathways and awaken fresh somatic awareness benefiting not only our ability to survive, but our ability to thrive.

Let any fragmented parts of yourself, fall away to reveal the loving truth beneath them, the beauty that is you.

This is a nice soft and surrendered sequence. It connects you with what it's like to melt your body open. As you move into the practice, keep in mind to never go any faster than the slowest part of you. Pay particular attention to how you feel in each pose. Do you tighten your neck, tense your shoulders, grip your jaw or tense your ribs? Are you innocuously contracting your booty in particular poses? Do you tense your neck to lift your legs up? This is the kind of awareness you want to begin to cultivate in your practice.

Practise holding each pose effortlessly; with as least effort as possible. Practise relaxing into each pose. Let the breath move through the pose, so the pose does not exhaust you. Imagine how different life would be if you could let yourself be carried through life, as opposed to all the force and control you may usually apply. We use a lot of energy when we try to force things to happen. Use this time on your mat to practise letting 'ease' be your focus.

Don't worry if you can't remember all this. Rome wasn't built in a day and neither is our connection to self. I'll be sharing these messages throughout the series in various different ways. Let this awareness grow organically over time. Don't force anything. Using force will only keep you in contracted fear state. Let this awareness happen on its own. Simply invite it in, give yourself permission to experience it and let the body listen to your loving requests.

Watch the video and if you need to adjust any poses to make them more suitable for your perfect body, take a peek at the detailed descriptions in the **Letting Go 30-min manual** and find the 'Other Way' that best work for you. Don't get caught up in reading this whole manual just now. Come back and revisit it after you've started your practice so you can gradually refine the poses and learn more about which poses activate what parts of you.

Once you've done the sequence a few times and feel more familiar with the flow of poses, start to focus on your *sensory* experience of the practice. The more you feel your body in each pose, the more you'll become aware of where you're holding tension and be able to breathe love into that area to help it release and let go.

Become self-aware so you can move out of the habitual ruts that restrict and limit you.

It goes without saying that the longer the time you spend on the mat, the more your body will undo. So while the mini-sequences are brilliant in their own right, you will experience far more tension-release in the 30, and especially, the 60-minute sequences (once you get up to them). **Base Position** is ideal for letting go, and that's why we spend extra time in **Base Position** in the **Letting Go sequences**, as it allows time to notice the more subtle tightening, and undo any extra tightness or imbalance in the muscles. If you'd like to explore this in depth, there's a mini-sequence that is solely focused on releasing tension in **Base Position** called **Sea of Love**.

The *Yoga for the Vagina* guided audios use conscious directions to ease the body out of habitual contractive patters. This is why I encourage you to follow along to the audios, as opposed to going freestyle for at least the first year of practice (Layer 3 and Layer 4 learnings has a different focus). Through this guidance your body will learn how to balance itself for a deeper embodiment of more supportive patterns.

Ok, it's time to string your egg, light a candle or five (if that so rocks your boat), gather some coconut oil and make your way into you practice space for some body shaking. Yes this sequence is the only sequence in the series that begins standing up! So jump on your mat, for a little booty shaking fun and lets begin to release all that 'stuff' you no longer need. It's time. Time to be free!

LETTING GO 30MIN SEQUENCE RUNDOWN

POSES	TIMES
Body Shake	1-min
Love Wrap & Letting Go	4-min
Breast Massage	3-min
Vulva Massage	3-min
Sipping	3-min
Pulse / Intention	1-min
Rock'n Roll	30-sec
Pussy Cat	3-min
Extended Child's Pose	30-sec
Shoulder Shrugs	90-sec
Rest	30-sec
Horizontal Ballerina	3-min
Rest	30-sec
Relaxation	3-min
Stretches	30-sec
Rock'n Roll	30-sec
Self-Love Blessing	2-min