



hEDS/HSD Exercise: Befriending the body, relax and unwind

Class 1 invites you to explore a different way of relating to your body. The challenge is to be curious about exploring your body anew, feeling things differently, moving differently, even breathing differently. These new ways of relating to, using and taking care of your body can lead to improved pain relief, improved function, and improved stability/safety in your body. When positioning yourself for any exercise you may need to use cushions to support the contours of your body. This can be the first exercise in itself, starting to notice the shape and alignment of the body and learning how to support those areas that require it.

1. **RELAX:** Lying on a comfortable surface, *with appropriate support*, in your relaxation position. Start by becoming aware of the weight of your body, and all the contact points between the surface you are resting on, and your body.



2. **1,2,3, breathing:** Rest your hands in the three positions below and direct your breath to each place in turn, taking a number of gentle breaths at each place. Feel how the body moves to expand the chest at the different levels allowing more air to enter the body.



3. **Pelvic tilts:** control a small range of movement tilting your pelvis towards your nose and then towards your toes. Imagine a marble resting in your belly button, try to move slowly so the marble remains on your belly and moves in a straight line, up and down.





4. Pelvic twists: control a small range of movement lifting one hip whilst twisting hips to face the opposite side; twist from side to side. Again imagine the marble resting in your belly button, this time allow it to roll in a straight line across your belly, without rolling off.



5. Adductor hold: gently hold a ball/pillow between your knees, on exhalation feel the tension provided by the ball without squashing the ball, as you inhale soften a little in your thighs. Use this exercise to develop extra control of your leg position this will help support your weight more effectively through your legs, knees, ankles and feet.



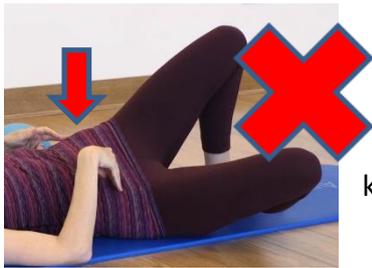
6. Shoulder rolls: **A** Bend at the elbows to give yourself a 'shorter arm'. As you breathe in focus on the weight of your shoulder dropping back into your shoulder socket, as you exhale allow your elbow to 'float' upwards. Following an inbreath, exhale and allow your arm to move in a controlled way back to the ground, continue to focus on the heaviness of the arm, and the weight of the shoulder dropping back into the socket. **B**: To progress this exercise you can use a straight arm which requires more strength to control the movement.



AVOID the shoulder lifting off the ground.
AVOID the back & ribs arching off the ground.



7. Knee drop: focus on the weight of the pelvis anchoring you to the floor. On an exhalation lower one knee out to the side, like the moving hands of a clock. Inhale and on your next exhalation bring the knee back to the upright position.



AVOID letting your pelvis roll and lift as your knee drops out, keep both sides of the pelvis in contact with the floor.

8. Bridge: position the ball/pillow between your knees, holding it securely in place without squeezing, and ensuring your hips and knees are in alignment with each other. On an exhalation tilt the pelvis as you did in exercise (2), continue to let your pelvis float up off the floor, keep your ribs resting and open on the floor. Breathe in, and as you exhale lower your body back to the floor.



9. Spinal rotation: stretch your arms out to the sides and inhale. As you exhale allow both knees to drop together to the side. Keep your inner ankles 'glued together'. Take an in breath and as you exhale rotate your knees back to centre and over to the other side.



10. Finish in the rest position, focus on your breath & the structure/weight of your body.